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Dinesh D'Souza on the Danger of Techno-Utopia

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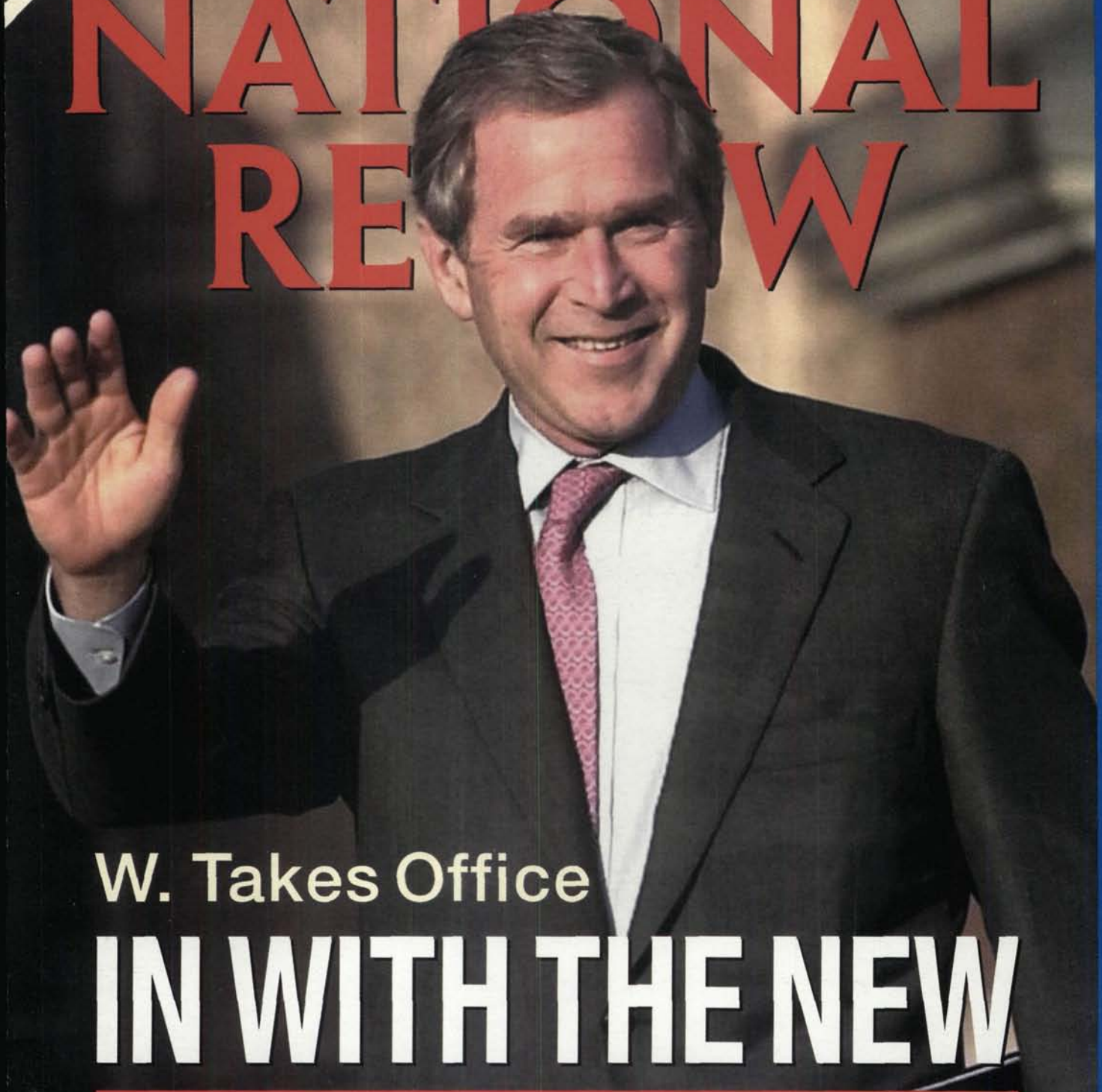

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- *A roundup of advice from Steve Forbes, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and others*
- *Ramesh Ponnuru on self-government and the conservative future*
- *Richard Brookhiser on Bush's presidential forebear (no, not Dad)*
- *The Editors on the Cabinet*

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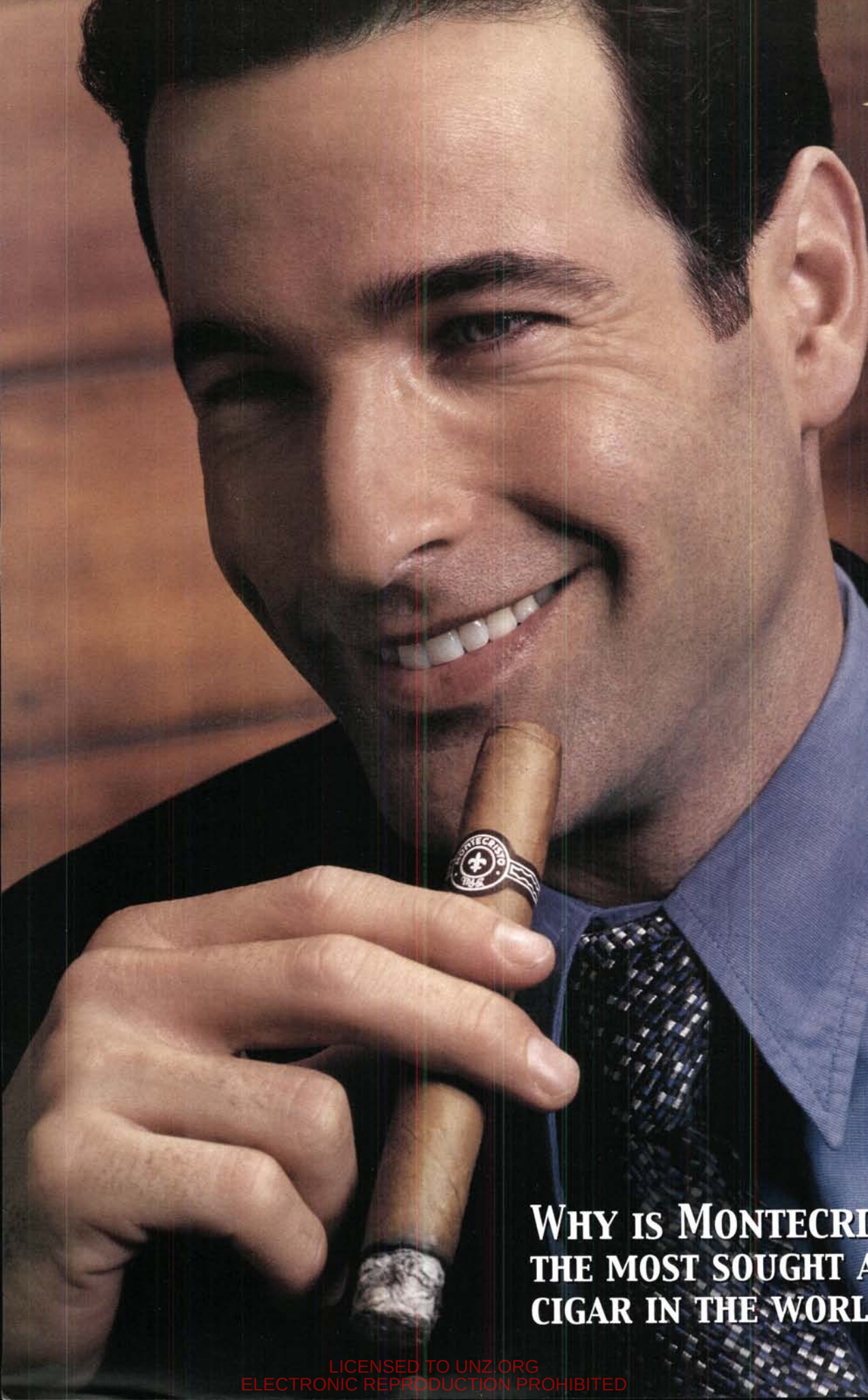

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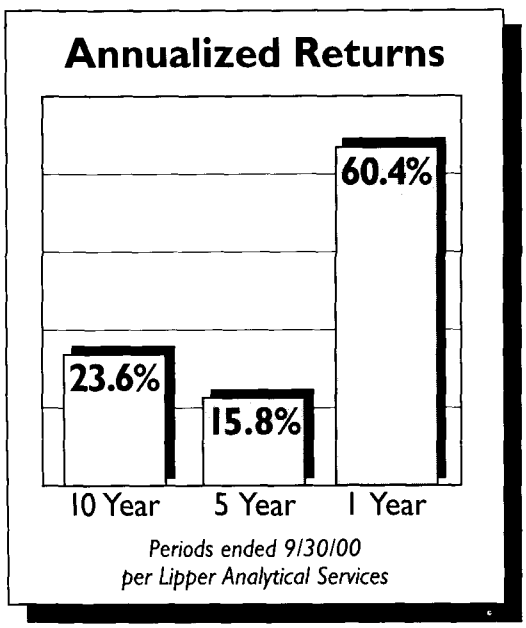

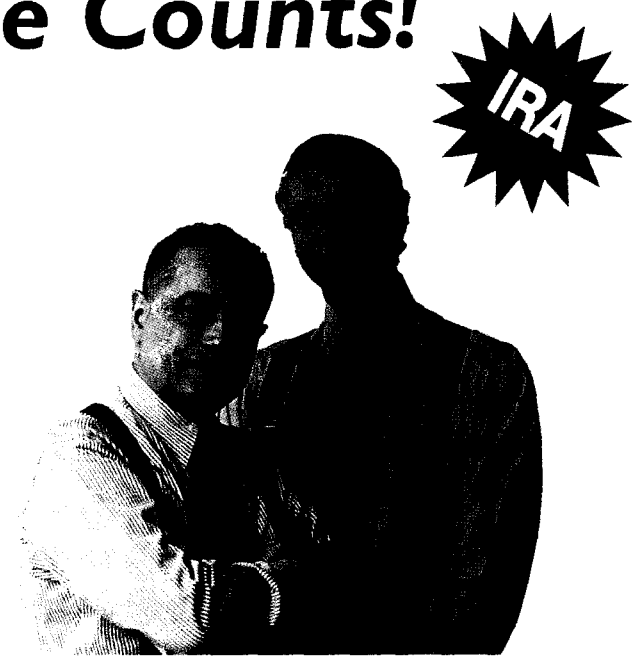

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■ LETTERS ■

STREET PEOPLE

Well, in all of my 42 years I have never written a letter to the editor of anything, much less a national political magazine. But after Rob Long's article, "Into the Streets" (Dec. 18), I felt compelled—no, empowered!—to write.

It all began on Thanksgiving Day. After a traditional Texas feast, my extended family and I sat down to watch television, and by the end of the most recent election update, we could stand it no longer. My girl cousins and I loaded our collective children into my Suburban, and we made off for the Governor's Mansion (we are blessed to live in Austin). We dug out our "left-over-from-the-election" Bush-Cheney signs, and, waving them heartily, marched around and around the block. Initially we stated firmly that we were there to show support for our beloved governor, who (by all accounts) was getting "a bad deal all around." We were not actually *demonstrating* (sounds tacky, and besides, we're *Republicans*, forgoodnesssakes). But as the weekend continued, our feelings of helplessness and outrage progressed, and we found ourselves again on the street with our signs in front of that venerable old white house with the Lone Star iron gates. We were *demonstrating*, and it was wonderful.

Stacy Jones
Austin, Tex.

A WITNESS

In reference to the review of Walter Krivitsky's memoir *In Stalin's Secret Service* ("Shelf Life," Dec. 31): When Krivitsky died in 1941, he left his wife and son in the care of my aunt, Suzanne LaFollette. I was 16 years old at the time. My aunt told her family, "Walter said that, if he ever was reported to have committed suicide, not to believe it." He knew he was marked for murder by the Soviet secret service. For further elucidation of Krivitsky's role in the struggle between Bolshevism and the Free World, see Krivitsky's words in Whittaker Chambers's *Witness*: "*Man kommt nicht leicht von Stalin los* [One does not come away from Stalin easily]."

From that time on, I never believed that any Soviet defector had committed suicide.

Nancy Ann Holtz
Salem, Mass.

NR AT 45

What nostalgic pleasure it was to read about your 45th-anniversary dinner (Dec. 31)! It brought back memories of the 20th at the Plaza, which my dear husband (he died this past June) and I attended.

Seeing Ronald Reagan up close, sharing a table with W. H. von Dreele, listening to Malcolm Muggeridge speak, shaking hands with Bill Buckley while he complained about the chilled red wine—all are favorite memories.

I cannot remember how long we've been subscribers, but I think we must be among the oldest! It's been a pleasure.

Jean Newhouse
Fayetteville, Ark.

SAY IT AIN'T SO

NATIONAL REVIEW's 45th-birthday issue arrived at my house just days after my own 45th. My first thought was, "What a nice present!"

But on page 56, I read that, in the aftermath of the election, Rob Long will not be continuing his letters to Rusty. My birthday celebration was transformed into a wake for this wonderful addition to your magazine. Certainly there are other boobs in Washington for Mr. Long to lampoon. Might he reconsider?

Stan Hardegree
Villa Rica, Ga.

A PLACE FOR CONNERLY

I was extremely impressed with the article by Ward Connerly in the Dec. 18 issue ("The GOP's Black Problem"). I hope that George W. Bush will find a place for him in his administration. The time has come for conservatives to express themselves forthrightly on a subject that needs principled, national exposure. Connerly is the right person for the job.

Don Power
(via e-mail)

OVERLOOKED?

Regarding "Staffing W." in your Dec. 31 issue: How could you not suggest Thomas Sowell for education secretary?

Bernie Smith
Troy, Mich.

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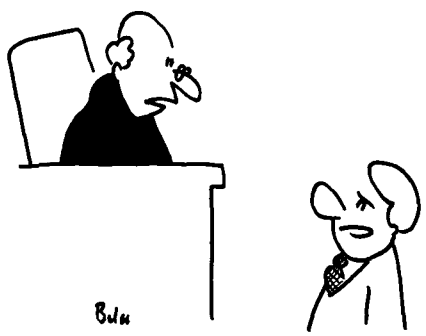
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ Florida elector (and HUD secretary nominee) **Mel Martinez** on casting vote for **George W. Bush**, in Associated Press: "It was like, finally, we did it." . . . **Newt Gingrich**, on Bush: "If he spends a lot of his time trying to appease the Right at the expense of reaching out to the middle, he will destroy his administration." . . . D.C. executive assistant police chief **Terrance W. Gainer**, on Inauguration Day protesters, in *Washington Post*: "They've clearly indicated . . . that they want to come and disrupt the parade, and we're not going to let that happen." . . . Bush, on whether he takes mulligans while playing golf, as President **Clinton** routinely does: "No."

■ **Gore** aide **Carter Eskew**, in *New York Times*: "The popular vote was 50–50, the Florida Supreme Court voted 4 to 3, the U.S. Supreme Court voted 5 to 4. . . . To [Gore], this is all a fractal, the geometric theory that pieces of the whole, regardless of the scale, reflect the universe. He says it all the time." . . . Gore, on learning Florida secretary of state **Katherine Harris** would play important election role, according to *New York Times*: "What do we know about her?" . . . Gore staffer **Mark Fabiani**, on Harris: "I felt we needed to do something to delegitimize her because [Gore would suffer] if we let people perceive her as a figure of authority." . . . Following concession to Bush, Gore dances and drinks till 3 A.M. "He waved his arms and led others, as everyone jumped up and down," source tells New York *Daily News*. "The floor was actually bouncing. It was a frenzy, like Studio 54 all over again." . . . **Mark Levin** of Landmark Legal Foundation, to Associated Press: "The conservative base is driven now to make certain that the Clinton-Gore team is forever washed away from the halls of power."

■ Sen. **Joe Biden** (D., Del.), on Gore, in *New York Times*: "It will be an uphill battle for him to get the nomination again." . . . Rep. **Adam Smith** (D., Wash.), on Gore in 2004, in *Washington Post*: "From my particular interest, a fresh face might serve us well, given what a tough battle we've been through." . . . Some believe Gore may run for governor of Tennessee in 2002. . . . Electoral College vote features one faithless elector: a District of Columbia Democrat who refuses to cast her ballot for Gore in protest of D.C.'s lack of representation in Congress. . . . Two employees quit Democratic consulting firm headed by **Bob Beckel** in protest of attempts to persuade Republican electors to abstain or switch to Gore. . . . **Jesse Jackson**: "What we have is a coup d'état led by the U.S. Supreme Court." . . . Rep. **Nita Lowey** tapped to head Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, replacing Rep. **Patrick Kennedy**.



"Is it true that you lied to Congress?"
"Yes, but they started it!"

■ Clinton, in *New York Times*: "I noticed that there was much less appetite for the politics of personal destruction in this election than there had been in many others, and I hope that maybe that's one of the consequences of all that I did, and maybe—I mean, what we all went through, and maybe that will be something that's really good for the country over the long run. Maybe nobody else will ever have to go through this." . . . Clinton, on **Ken Starr**, on 60 *Minutes II*: "They put him in there to drag it out and, you know, get a bigger body count." . . . Clinton Presidential Center designer **James Stewart Polshek**, in *New York Times*: "In a political way, and for reasons that have never been explicitly stated, [Clinton is] very concerned about openness, which is why he wanted there to be so much daylight." Polshek also calls it "a place to inhale." . . . **Hillary Clinton** signs book deal worth $8 million. . . . Previously unknown writings of **Ronald Reagan**—drafts of 1970s radio addresses—set for publication in February. "It's extraordinary to see these written out in hand," former aide **Martin Anderson** tells *Washington Times*. "You see his corrections. You see his mind at work. I know a lot of intelligent people who can't write. But I don't know any person who writes this well who is not intelligent."

■ Rep. **Robert Andrews** (D., N.J.), in *National Journal*: "I think the government takes in enough revenue—maybe a little too much." . . . Justice **Clarence Thomas**, on why he rarely speaks during oral arguments: "Unless I want an answer, I don't ask things. I don't ask for entertainment. I don't ask to give people a hard time." . . . Census counts 281 million Americans. . . . Arizona, Georgia, Florida, and Texas to gain 2 House seats each; California, Colorado, Nevada, and North Carolina to gain 1; New York and Pennsylvania to lose 2; Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin to lose 1. . . . Army shuts down School of the Americas, opens Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation to fill same function. . . . Annual report by Freedom House concludes democracy and human rights made major gains in 2000.

■ "Now it is clear that the moment has arrived to reestablish our position in this region of the world," says Russian president **Vladimir Putin** on Cuba visit. "This corresponds with the economic and national interests of Russia, and it will permit us to strengthen our position around the globe." . . . Cuba blocks incoming phone calls from United States. . . . Trade with China expected to hit $73.5 billion in 2000, says Xinhua News Agency. . . . European Union estimates 500,000 illegal immigrants arrived last year.

■ Sign at transition headquarters: "Welcome to the Bush-Cheney Presidential Transition Team!" Another sign, nearby: "Finally!" **NR**

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THE WEEK

■ In a recent issue of *New York* magazine, former mayor Ed Koch said that Bill Clinton would himself be a "fun mayor. Like Jimmy Walker without the corruption." Poor Jimmy: All he ever did was steal.

■ In a farewell interview with Dan Rather for *60 Minutes II*, Clinton allowed that he and majority whip Tom DeLay had different views about dealing with opponents: "He's got a total scorch-and-burn policy, you know. Take them out whatever the cost, whatever you have to do." But surely this is Clinton's own policy toward opponents, inconvenient employees, and lovers. Shrinks call this projection; Clintonologists call it par for the course. The 42nd president is a young man, and we will have to endure many years of it: none more, thankfully, from the Oval Office.

■ The $8 million advance of Sen.-elect Hillary Rodham Clinton provoked fulminations, particularly over the injustice of Newt Gingrich's having to foreswear his relatively modest $4.5 million advance six years ago. The legitimacy of Newt's gripe tends to support Mrs. Clinton's bonanza, however. Authors (or, in cases like Mrs. Clinton's, "authors") are entitled to earn what the market will bear. Critics might better deplore the mind-set of a publishing industry that believes, in defiance of the evidence, that it can earn back such bloated celebrity advances, while real writers earn pittances. At today's prices, $8 million would buy about 500 first novels, 490 of which would certainly be better than whatever Mrs. Clinton's village of scribes produces.

■ "Terry is more wired than your local electric plant," said Mrs. Clinton at a Democratic fundraiser in June 1999. She certainly knows the score. Terry McAuliffe, Democratic money-man extraordinaire, has raised more than $275 million for the Clintons over the years. And the new senator—her eye on the White House in 2004—wants him around for the future. So it's no surprise that she and her husband made sure McAuliffe would become the next chairman of the Democratic National Committee. While that's a godsend for the Democrats' bank account, it's at least a minor blessing for Republicans: Any time they find themselves nostalgic for a good Clinton scandal, they can simply take aim at the DNC chief. The Lincoln Bedroom sellout? McAuliffe's idea. The plan to swap campaign money with the Teamsters? Ditto. Questionable business deals? He's got plenty. McAuliffe's presence at the DNC virtually guarantees that some of the most memorable sleaze of the Clinton years will stay with us. And he will no doubt come up with more.

■ What is it with Senate Democrats and death? Not long ago, the party held just 45 seats. Then, last July, Georgia Republican Paul Coverdell died suddenly, allowing the state's Democratic governor to appoint his successor. Then one of the party's own, Missouri governor Mel Carnahan, died during his campaign to defeat John Ashcroft. Democrats came up with a creative, successful, and probably unconstitutional scheme to run the dead man while pledging to appoint his widow to the office. Now, with the Senate tied 50–50, some Democrats have taken to musing shamelessly that if just one more person dies—a Republican from a state with a Democratic governor—Democrats will control the Senate. They seem to be eyeing Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms with particular interest, but they might want to take a look in the mirror. Democratic old-timers Robert Byrd and Ernest Hollings come from states with Democratic governors. On the other hand, Ted Kennedy, while younger, hasn't, er, taken the best care of himself—and his state has a Republican governor. But enough of that. We wish all senators good health. If Democrats want control, they should stop honing their death strategy and get ready for the next election.

■ The Clinton administration wanted to wait it out on missile defense, taking the smallest steps possible toward an actual system. George Bush can nonetheless begin his push for missile defense by building on Clinton's grudging legacy. The administration's sole planned missile-defense site in Alaska was inadequate, and Clinton declined even to begin constructing it. Bush should break ground there immediately, because all the gadgets involved in the Alaska project—the radar, the space-based sensors, the software—will be necessary to a more extensive, technologically sophisticated system in the future. (Also, a little protection, for now, is better than none.) Meanwhile, Bush needs almost to double spending on missile defense—from $4 billion annually to $7 billion—in order to develop and deploy the most comprehensive system possible, whether that system is ultimately a ground-, sea-, air- or space-based one. In addition, the allies—and, most important, the Russians—need to be put on notice that the U.S. will not long tolerate a dusty parchment barrier, in the form of the ABM treaty, to its self-defense. Bill Clinton, always the flirt, played footsie with missile defense for years. It's now up to W. to get serious.

■ President Clinton's recess appointment of Roger Gregory to the Fourth Circuit is appalling on several levels. First is the way it was done: Recess appointments—made while Congress is out of session—are intended primarily for emergency situations, which this is not. It is also an affront to the idea of life tenure. The Framers wanted judges to feel insulated from political pressure, and to rule by law rather than

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Environmental Protectic

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at the
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and the author of
To America's Health:
A Proposal to Reform
the Food and Drug
Administration.

Federal regulations costing Americans approximately 700 billion dollars annually seem as inevitable as death and taxes. All regulations, however, are not created equal. Some are reasonably cost-effective and serve society well; others are so wrongheaded and expensive that they are actually detrimental to society.

Regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been criticized for being inefficient and unscientific. When the Office of Management and Budget analyzed the cost-effectiveness of a panoply of regulations throughout the federal government, of the thirty least cost-effective regulations on the list, seventeen had been imposed by the EPA. This impression of inefficiency is reinforced in an analysis by Washington, D.C., based Resources for the Future (RFF) of eight major EPA regulatory programs of the past two decades. RFF concluded that the science behind the policy often gets distorted or ignored: "EPA for a variety of reasons is unwilling, unable, and unequipped to address and acknowledge the uncertainties in the underlying science."

The courts have often had to rein in or educate EPA officials. In May 1999, for example, a federal court ruled that the EPA's new air-quality standards were arbitrary and capricious and had to be revised. In May 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to rule on whether the EPA's policy of deliberately disregarding the cost of its regulations is required by the Clean Air Act. A public policy research institution and forty prominent economists argued persuasively in an amicus brief that the EPA should "consider explicitly the full consequences" of regulatory decisions, including costs, benefits, and any other pertinent facts.

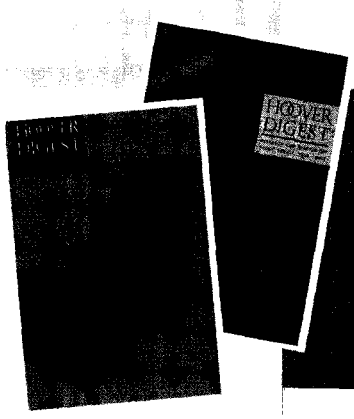
Perhaps the most systematically egregious EPA policies have been those applied to biotechnology. The agency has been consistently at odds with scientific consensus about biotechnology's risk, choosing to focus on the most precise and predictable techniques of biotechnology while ignoring genuinely hazardous products. These policies have been a drag on innovation of products that are particularly environmentally friendly. Under the Toxic Substances Control Act, for example, the EPA focuses regulation on gene splicing—the most precise technique of the new biotechnology—an approach that has halted research into microorganisms engineered to clean up oil spills and toxic wastes.

EPA regulations have also inhibited research on new plant varieties that require fewer applications and lesser amounts of agricultural chemicals. The agency requires the testing *as pesticides* of gene-spliced crop and garden plants that have been modified for enhanced pest and disease resistance. This policy imposes extensive and expensive regulatory requirements on field tests of gene-spliced cotton plants that have increased resistance to insects, for example, but exempts plants with virtually identical traits that were engineered by cruder, less-predictable hybridization techniques. The scientific community has repeatedly condemned the EPA's approach.

Many of the EPA's regulatory programs are unscientific and afford little or no protection to human health or the environment. They have unacceptable costs and divert resources from other legitimate endeavors. They breed well-deserved cynicism about the government's motives. Often, the only environment that benefits is that of the bureaucrats themselves.

— Henry I. Miller

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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sentiment. Now Gregory finds himself essentially up for reconfirmation in a year, like a congressman who will seek reelection—precisely the dilemma life tenure was supposed to avoid. But worst of all is the assertion that a heroic Clinton is "integrating an all-white court," as the *New York Times* put it, and acting in defiance of "Republican senators [who] have wanted to keep it that way." In fact, the Senate has not confirmed a judge of any color for months, and the Fourth Circuit's chief judge, J. Harvie Wilkinson, has said his bench doesn't need more bodies. The real point of Clinton's move was probably to embarrass Bush as he assembles a cabinet that is both genuinely diverse and conservative. But the Clinton gambit is pathetic, and the Bush administration should make it clear that Gregory might as well go ahead and vote his conscience—because there's no way he will have his recess appointment extended to life.

■ Eight years ago, the Clinton campaign bashed the senior Bush for presiding over the worst economy since the Depression, though economic growth in the last quarter of 1992 was 5.4 percent, and was nearly 4 percent for the entire year. Talk about "talking down the economy." Now Clinton is attacking President-elect Bush as irresponsible for merely citing "warning signs on the horizon" of a possible slowdown. Never mind that Alan Greenspan's latest Fed policy statement indicates that recession is a greater economic threat than inflation. Never mind that the latest government data show a rapid downturn. Maybe it's guilty feelings that make the Clintonites so sensitive. By vetoing numerous bipartisan tax-cut bills, the administration has refused to replenish purchasing power to a private-sector workforce suffering from record personal tax payments, pervasive tax-bracket creep, and higher energy prices. By silently accepting the Fed's overkill on high interest rates, the administration has contributed to a credit crunch. And by rushing through a raft of new regulations via executive orders, the administration has discouraged business investment and risk-taking. Bush should be undeterred—he should tell the truth, and cut taxes.

■ By some estimates, as many as 29,000 new Federal Register pages will be added in Clinton-administration "midnight regulation," that last-minute (and often late-night) rush to regulate that will beat even the 25,000 pages of new rules issued by Jimmy Carter in his last presidential moments 20 years ago. From declaring the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge off-limits for energy drilling, to imposing new trucking regulations to reduce sulfur in diesel fuel, to 88 new EPA rules, Clinton is advancing his regulatory agenda through executive-branch decrees that bypass the normal legislative process. The economic cost of these new regulations could be $200 billion per year, a burden that would raise consumer prices, reduce corporate profits, and lower productivity-enhancing capital investment. As President Reagan did in the early moments of his own administration, George W. Bush should quickly launch a regulatory-review process to roll back the eleventh-hour Clinton assault on economic freedom and growth. In broad daylight.

■ The Census counted 281,421,906 Americans, without the help of sampling or other statistical legerdemain. States carried by George W. Bush stand to gain seven electoral votes, while states carried by Al Gore will lose seven—hardly a landslide, but worth keeping in mind as Democrats wrangle over Bush's mandate. Losses were concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest, and gains in the Sunbelt, reaffirming the attractions of low taxes (and good weather). The percentage of foreign-born Americans hit 9.5—the highest since 1930, when it was 11.6. There is a lot to admire about the America of 1930—it had just produced the Greatest Generation. But the swinging percentages should remind us that American immigration has proceeded in waves. Digestion and assimilation are essential aspects of what has been a remarkably successful process.

■ The mayor of Alhambra, Calif., Paul Talbot, has issued an unusual apology—to the government of China. His error had been to proclaim "Falun Gong Week" in his town (which is heavily Asian). Falun Gong is the meditation movement—utterly benign—that Beijing has oppressed without mercy, jailing, torturing, and killing many of its members. Mayor Talbot had apparently not realized that the group was "controversial." His proclamation angered the local Red consulate, so Talbot apologized, saying, "We didn't intend it to be an endorsement of a political position." Let us hope that a man so cowardly and stupid as Paul Talbot is never again endorsed by anyone, ever. And let it be "Falun Gong Week" everywhere.

■ In June 1975, FBI agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams stopped a car on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota, looking for a robbery suspect. Three men with rifles got out of the car and shot the agents. As they lay wounded, they were dispatched with execution-style shots at close range. Leonard Peltier, a radical Indian activist, was convicted of the crime, and given two consecutive life sentences; all his appeals have failed; he has said he considers the shootings "self-defense." A petition for clemency is on the desk of outgoing President Clinton. Five hundred active and retired FBI agents demonstrated in Washington last month to keep Peltier in prison. Who knows what Mr. Clinton will decide, tugged as he is by grandstanding, cowardice, and sloth? The facts of the case seem clearer.

■ It is striking that what once were commonplace assumptions about sex—based on experience, and embodied in customs and expectations—are now so unusual that their attempted revival amounts to a Page One item in the *New York Times*. It seems that teaching chastity before marriage in elementary school is on the rise. Sample: In a cartoon, Teenager Jenny is about to comply with the wishes of her boyfriend. "Paul loves me." Good Witch (the guide): "Oh? Is that why he asked you to do something that might mess up your life forever?" *Eureka!* The wheel is being rediscovered. Sex has plenty of physical and emotional risks; marriage tends to minimize them. Very seldom are the commitments of unmarried partners at all equal. The

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trivialization of sex has tended to trivialize life. The sexual free-for-all that began in the Sixties exacted a very high price, most of which was paid by women. Custom once protected them. The awareness of that is spreading, but the casualties have been piling up for a long time.

■ After Al Gore's concession, Russia and Canada joined hands to warn the United States not to develop a missile defense. (They certainly had had nothing to fear from the Clinton administration). After meeting in Ottawa, Russia's Putin and Canada's Chrétien issued a statement alleging that the 1972 ABM treaty is "a cornerstone of strategic stability." One good thing about America: We protect our allies, whether they deserve it or not. And Canada, one fine (or awful) day, may well benefit from a U.S. missile defense. And Washington will ask for no remorse.

■ Human beings display remarkable inventiveness when it comes to devising new forms of mischief. The international court dreamed up by the United Nations is a recent example. This body proposes to decide who international criminals might be, and then bring them to trial. Real criminals, the Jiangs and Saddams and Milosevices, cannot be seized until they are no longer in a position to do damage, and they will be encouraged to cling to power to the bitter end. President Pinochet, who saved his country from Communism, was victimized for it under this concept of international criminality—in plain language, kidnapped by those with a socialist ideology opposed to his. Mrs. Thatcher could be arrested for rescuing the Falkland Islands from the Argentinian junta. Every recent American president would be open to arrest for acts of foreign policy that were essentially peace-keeping. There would be calls to put American servicemen on trial, and if they claimed to have been obeying orders they would no doubt be told that Hitler's Nazis had tried to use this very same defense. Here is no advance for human rights but a step toward a form of global lynch law. President Clinton signed up for this monstrosity in one last poisoned gift to the nation. Freedom-loving people will have nothing to do with it.

Ashcroft Comes

The liberals, re-forming
In fever swamp and fen,
Recoil as rude conservatives
Reprise "Stouthearted Men."
The hearings will resemble
Medieval tournaments
Till Janet Reno's exorcised
And Dems head for the Gent's.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ Double, double toil and trouble, cry the three witches in *Macbeth*, whose names turn out to be Arafat, Barak, and Clinton, an ABC of absolute unwisdom. What an object lesson it is to observe the grim trio, each adding his own ingredients to stoke up the cauldron of the Middle East. Almost 350 people have been killed in the latest bout of Israeli–Palestinian violence, and thousands more injured. That is the result of a peace process that is not about peace nor a process of any kind, but merely a platform for the vanities and ambitions of small men. "A" talks of honor when he has none, "B" aches to be reelected when he does not deserve to be, and "C" is still vainly hoping that the history books will find something positive to say about him. The Germans have a word, *Totentanz*, or dance of death, for performances like these. Anything can happen in these uncertain circumstances, from signatures of agreement extracted under last-minute duress and with virtually no chance of enduring, to even greater acts of violence whose consequences are unforeseeable. The peoples of the Middle East all deserve better.

■ Love of the arts marks enlightenment, and Vladimir Putin is a ruler who proves the point. He has just commissioned new words for the Russian national anthem, and a line in the chorus tells the Russians, "You are unique in the world, inimitable." Ever the patron, he has placed a monument to Stalin in the Kremlin. In a recent poll, Russians named Lenin as the Man of the Twentieth Century, with Stalin a runner-up. That anthem's "inimitable" is the *mot juste*.

■ The mills of political correctness grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. You've been wondering how long it would take the guardians of our virtue to get around to Frosty the Snowman? Wonder no more. Dr. Tricia Cusack, an art historian on the faculty of England's Birmingham University, has, after five years of work on the subject, delivered herself of a 15-page paper titled "The Christmas Snowman, Carnival and Patriarchy." She concludes that Frosty is racist, sexist, and "grotesque," a symbol of greed (he's fat, see?), nationalism, and capitalism. Also that he upholds a "gendered spatial-social system," and that "his presence is a reminder of masculine dominance, order and surveillance." Writer Raymond Briggs, fighting a lonely rearguard action in Frosty's defense, has pointed out that British snow is too sloppy for the sculpting of properly feminine breasts and bottoms. It is hopeless, of course. Look out for the first thin, black, female snowpersons—sans pipe, of course!

■ According to Karl von Clausewitz, military justice is to justice as military music is to music. The great strategist lived, of course, in a less litigious age than ours, and one much less encumbered with regulations. Now military justice may be about to triumph over military music. A "safety audit" carried out by Britain's Ministry of Defence has discovered that the assault on soldiers' eardrums from regimental brass bands exceeds what is allowed in that country's regulations on noise in the workplace. Soldiers who develop hearing problems or tinnitus will now, presumably, have grounds for lawsuits. The

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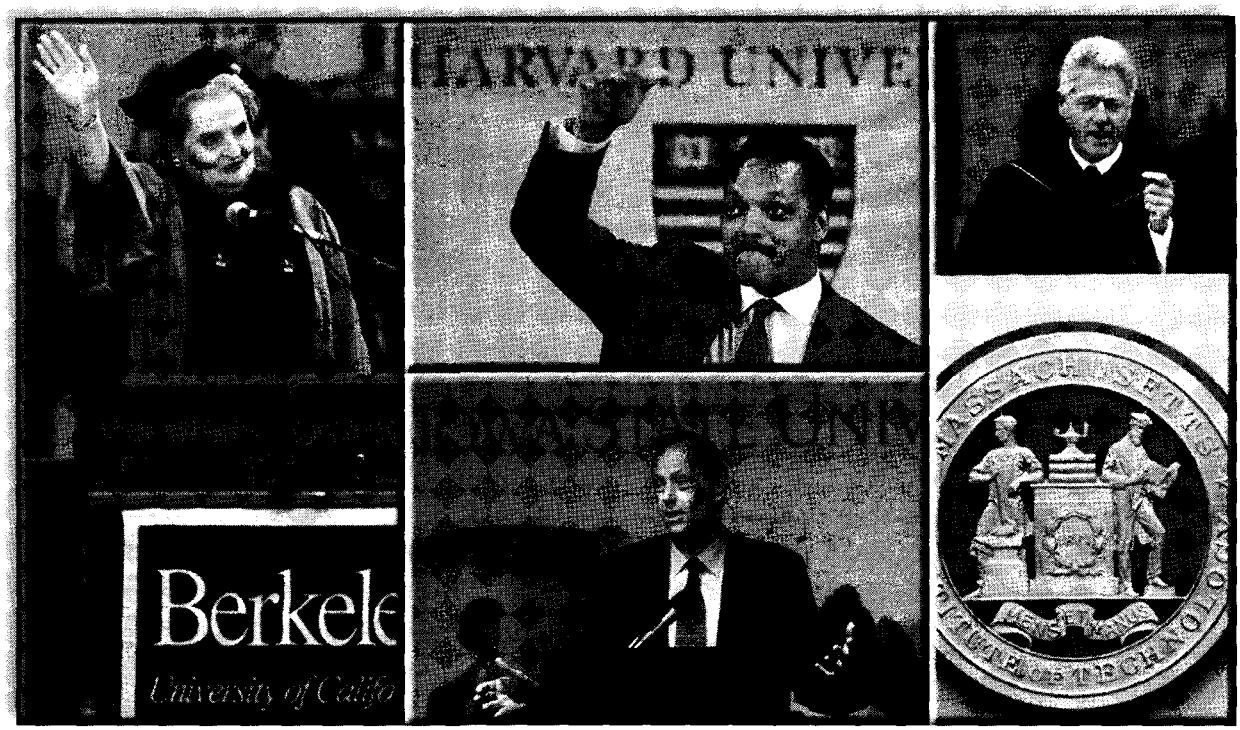

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sound of gunfire during military training also contravened the blessed regulations, the audit observed. Oddly, they had nothing to say about aural stress resulting from *actual warfare*, a deplorably noisy business.

■ There has always been a certain frisson of dominance and submission in the relationship between us air travelers (submissive) and the flight attendants (dominant) who wait on us. Who has not, at one time or other, detected the stern features of Nurse Ratched glowering through the fixed smiles and brisk courtesies of those who direct, instruct, seat, and feed us on our plane journeys? Swissair has now taken this aspect of things to a new level, issuing a ruling that their flight attendants will henceforth be allowed to slap sex pests, and to retaliate against other unruly passengers by tying them up in their seats. Setting aside the legal and ethical implications of this new policy, has it occurred to Swissair that such attentions may not be unwelcome to a certain subset of the traveling public?

■ The cadres have discovered the delights of exclusive travel, as a story on *The Nation*'s Caribbean cruise suggests. "It is such a relief," says novelist Barbara Kingsolver, "to be able to sit at a dinner table and know that you are not going to hear a sexist joke or a racist remark about the wait staff. There are so many Republicans out there. You just don't know where they'll turn up." We're on the bridge, ma'am, keeping a sharp eye out for froggy, when we're not at the mast, flogging.

THE ADMINISTRATION

Merry Christmas

As the list of nominees to George W. Bush's cabinet trickled out over the holidays, it slowly dawned on conservatives that this cabinet was more conservative than Ronald Reagan's first.

Go down the roster. Pro-life attorney general-designate John Ashcroft, as noted below, has already become the point man for liberal ire. When Donald Rumsfeld was last secretary of defense, in the Ford administration, he challenged the low estimates of Soviet strength offered by the CIA (then headed by George H.W. Bush). Over the years, Rumsfeld kept abreast of defense and foreign-policy issues, heading a congressionally appointed commission in the late '90s that called for missile defense. The Sierra Club has called Interior secretary-designate Gale Norton "James Watt in a skirt"; the libertarian Cato Institute agrees, and has hailed the appointment of this supporter of expanded oil drilling. Tommy Thompson would bring welfare innovations to Health and Human Services, just as he has brought them to Wisconsin. Spence Abraham, a principled conservative senator beaten this fall, was tapped for Energy; Linda Chavez, the former Democrat and child of working-class parents who became a feisty anti-feminist journalist, got the nod for Labor.

These are only the prominent movement conservatives. Paul O'Neill, nominated for Treasury, called for tax-code reform and rallied business to fight Hillary's health-care plan when he was chairman of Alcoa. Rod Paige, as superintendent of Houston's schools, raised scores, was open to reforms such as home schooling, and quietly defined himself, against the prevailing cultural currents, as a Republican. In the whole Bush administration, so far, the only obvious soft spots are chief of staff Andy Card, Colin Powell (who is Colin Powell), and Christie Whitman at the EPA. New Jersey businessmen have testified for Gov. Whitman, but the tropisms of the post pull in the direction of Kyoto-ish grandstanding, and she is not known for modesty.

The sequence of Bush's appointments was also important. Ashcroft was one of his first picks, and the outcry over him would have made a man disposed to backing off do so. But Bush saved Abraham and Chavez until the end. Nor was Bush intimidated by the chatter about Dick Cheney being his Cardinal Richelieu. If he had been, would he have summoned Cheney to stand silently at his side as he made his announcements? George W. Bush, we may be finding, has a saving indifference to the conventional wisdom and to Washington chat.

He clearly likes surprises. Up until the last minute, the press was picking Rumsfeld for CIA, and Abraham for Transportation. Bush likes to keep his own counsel, and he has an inner circle that helps him keep it. The Reagan administration leaked like a sieve; Bush demands, and inspires, the loyalty that zips lips.

The proposed Bush cabinet finally has a multiethnic and multiracial cast. Since Bush will gain no points from the targeted ethnic groups by such maneuvers, should he engage in them at all? But a cabinet is like a political ticket, where communal and regional identifications are properly considered along with pure merits—indeed, are merits. It should also be said that, unlike his predecessor, George W. Bush has put blacks in jobs (secretary of state, national security adviser) where they deal with foreign powers, and life and death, not just fussing with the internal machinery of the welfare state. Black Republicans are like Republican actors: There aren't many of either, but they stand a good chance of becoming president—or of holding an important cabinet post.

THE ADMINISTRATION II

To Ashcroft or Not to . . .

"To Ashcroft" should not be allowed to enter our vocabulary. The assault on attorney-general nominee John Ashcroft has all the hallmarks of a nasty piece of Washington gamesmanship: the blood-lust, the dishonesty, and the disingenuousness. The fundamental complaint about Ashcroft is that he is a conservative. But, since this isn't enough to sink a nomination (at least until Ralph Neas is made King), other reasons have to be manufactured. Sometimes literally. The *Washington Post*'s William Raspberry accused Ashcroft of opposing a bill to collect statistics on racial profiling. Actually, Ashcroft long ago called racial profiling unconstitutional and

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convened sympathetic hearings on the very bill in question (the legislation was never voted on, although Ashcroft worked with its sponsor, Russ Feingold, to forge a compromise version). *The Nation*'s Katrina Vanden Heuvel, with no factual support, accused Ashcroft of opposing a Holocaust reparations bill that passed the Senate by unanimous consent. Then there has been another kind of fiction: the entirely speculative charges that Ashcroft would not enforce the Brady bill or laws on abortion-clinic access. But the ex-senator supports instant background checks and the clinic-access law (he has always denounced anti-clinic violence), and nothing in his record suggests that he is a closet advocate of civil disobedience, ready to defy the nation's laws as soon as a columnist like Richard Cohen or Jack E. White isn't looking.

Even as Ashcroft's more respectable critics try to shift their complaints onto other grounds, the balance of the assault on him is that he is a racist for opposing the nomination to the federal bench of Missouri judge Ronnie White. This is an avenue of attack in keeping with the "Donna Brazile rule," which holds that any charge of racism—no matter how outrageous and unfair—can be made to stick in contemporary America. Ashcroft has voted in favor of every black judge who has been confirmed during his tenure as a U.S. senator. He has opposed only Frederica Massiah-Jackson, a Clinton nominee from Philadelphia so soft on crime she prompted the opposition of even Democratic district attorneys in Pennsylvania and had to be pulled by the White House—and White. Fifty-four Republicans voted against White, who had provoked the opposition of more than 75 Missouri sheriffs, Democrat and Republican, mainly with his lone, muddle-headed dissent in a capital case involving a man who murdered three sheriffs and a sheriff's wife. White's defeat would be unremarkable if it hadn't suddenly become so convenient.

With a rigorous Bush defense, the charges against Ashcroft should eventually sink of their own weightlessness. If "Ashcroft" must become a verb, it should mean only to clean up a Justice Department stained by incompetence and low politics, as in the eight long years from Waco to Elián.

ELECTION 2000

Strange New Restraint

THE aftermath of *Bush* v. *Gore* has proven a bonanza for judicial restraint, as everyone from E. J. Dionne to the *New York Times* is suddenly a strict constructionist. Apologies can be addressed to Robert H. Bork, c/o the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C. The criticism of the *Bush* decision from liberals ordinarily happy "to trust the people in black robes" (in the words of Doris Kearns Goodwin) is opportunistic, but that doesn't mean it is necessarily invalid.

The Supreme Court's 7–2 *per curiam* decision relied on the dubious argument that standardless, selective hand counts in Florida violated the Constitution's equal protection clause. But it's unclear why—with the different vote-tabulation systems from county to county, with different levels of accuracy—this line of reasoning wouldn't render Florida's entire electoral system unconstitutional. Or, for that matter, the *nation's* electoral system. In fact, all of *life* can be considered a violation of the equal protection clause, which is why the clause has traditionally been the Swiss Army knife of liberal jurisprudence, fit for achieving any result, however arbitrary.

And that wasn't the only weakness in *Bush*. The Court's conservatives—Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas—in their concurring opinion emphasized that the Florida court had violated Title 3, Section 5 of the U.S. Code, which says—quite sensibly—that a state's electors won't be considered conclusive if the rules in an election (oh, say, deadlines and standards for vote counting) change midstream. But the liberal dissenters in *Bush* argued persuasively that there is no judicial remedy for such a violation of Title 3, that it is the responsibility of *Congress* to sort out a state's true electors in such a controversy.

So, give the new supporters of judicial restraint their due. But at least Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas (if not their weak sisters Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy) did hit on legitimate grounds for overturning the Florida court: that it had violated Article II, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution, which grants to state legislatures—not judges—the power to set the manner in which states' electors are selected. All of the weaker arguments in *Bush* can be understood to circle back to this stronger one. On equal protection: There was no statewide standard for hand counts in Florida, but this is because the state legislature granted the discretion for discerning voter intent to county canvassing boards; the Florida court trampled on these canvassing boards. On Title 3: By creating new deadlines and last-minute mandates for new hand counts, the Florida court endangered the legitimacy of Florida's electors in a way the legislature could never have intended. In short, the Florida court set itself as a separate, competing legislative power in the state, which—in a case involving presidential electors, and hence the federal constitution—couldn't withstand constitutional scrutiny.

And this is the essential point: The Florida court, through its judicial lawlessness, forced the Supreme Court to act. (As the majority put it, ruling in *Bush* v. *Gore* was their "unsought responsibility.") Yes, as the *Bush* dissenters argued (opportunistically), political decisions are best left to political bodies, not to courts. But that is an argument for Al Gore never suing in Florida in the first place, for the Florida court never rewriting the state's statutes, and for liberals reconsidering their decades-long dependence on courts to effect their political agenda.

OBITUARY

John Lindsay, RIP

JOHN LINDSAY died many years after history was done with him. In the late Fifties and in the Sixties he was the primary young star of liberal Republicanism. He edged into victory as mayor of New York and harbinger of enlightened

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Republicanism in a race in which Conservative Party candidate William F. Buckley resonantly cleared his throat, challenging Mr. Lindsay's political agenda and insisting that in the order of political reality, he belonged not with Republican gatekeepers of overweening government, but with Democrats. Four years later he lost the Republican nomination and ran (and won) on the Liberal ticket. Two years after that he left the GOP and joined the Democrats, who, however, discouraged his presidential bid. In 1980, he came in third in another bid, to win the Democratic nomination for senator.

What went wrong? An agenda, on questions of race and education and security, that didn't take hold because New York City had mundane concerns which weren't met by high rhetoric about welfare and racial integration and obligations by Albany and Washington to oblige Mr. Lindsay's extravagances. His departure from the political scene was soon followed by a dismal series of enervating and awful illnesses which he fought bravely, and from which, finally, he was relieved in late December, at his home in Hilton Head, South Carolina. He was a dashing figure who'd have done better as a star than as a tribune. And he always, or nearly always, gave theatrical satisfaction, and that's not something to be lightly dismissed.

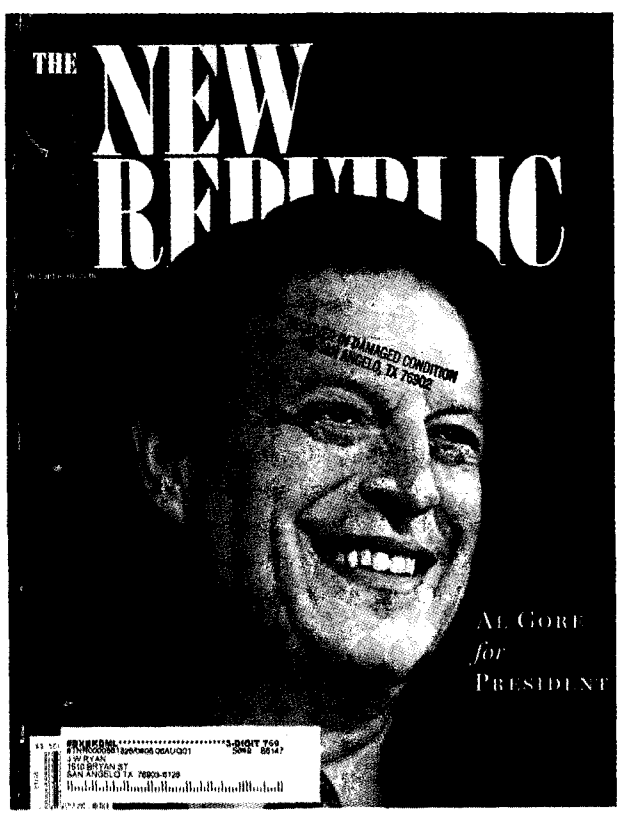
—WFB

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: The weather of late has had our business doing long hours, so 'twas only this weekend, as I caught up on my reading, that I noticed the enclosed magazine cover.

The postal stamp on the vice-presidential forehead tells me nothing new, granted, but I still thought it reassuring to have my opinion certified and stamped by an agency of the federal government.

Sincerely,
Jim Ryan
San Angelo, Tex.



■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Knowing your fondness for appropriate Latin expressions, I am passing along to you this one, recently unearthed by an elite group of classical scholars. It seems to anticipate today's reluctance to accept blame or responsibility for anything that might go wrong: *mea culpa sorta.*

Sincerely,
George A. Heinemann
Peoria, Ill.

Dear Mr. Heinemann: Now that is really quite special. But shouldn't it be *mea culpa sortum?*

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

Is the cephalic index a denominator of tip of pate to tip of chin with a numerator of across?
Or front to back with a numerator of across?
Observe the cranial dome from Heaven's view.
Behold! The vertical does become from front to back.
And across remains the same.
Heaven's view defines the round head.
Your view defines the round-faced prolate,
Describing not the round head but the blockhead.

Duane Ross
Waldwick, N.J.

Dear Mr. Ross: Whee! What *utter fun!* Many thanks.

WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: After reading your bias-laden post-election column, it becomes more than obvious to me that you should reconsider your strategy concerning sleeping pills. Please consume the entire bottle.

Sincerely,
Stan Strain
Modesto, Calif.

Dear Mr. Strain: If I weren't so sleepy, I'd think you were saying something unfriendly!

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ POLITICS ■

Because She Can

Hillary cashes in

BYRON YORK

In late 1982, Reagan-administration PR man Michael Deaver had an idea to write a book called *The White House Diet*. Earlier in the year, several top presidential aides had organized a weight-loss contest, and Deaver dropped 35 pounds on a diet of fish, vegetables, and apple juice. After a few favorable mentions in the newspapers, Deaver signed a contract with William Morrow & Company. The publisher gave him a $9,000 advance, to be followed by another $9,000 on delivery of the diet manuscript.

The White House counsel's office okayed the project, but Deaver soon ran afoul of public opinion when *New York Times* columnist William Safire wrote not one but two columns condemning the deal. Eventually, *The White House Diet* ended up at the Office of Government Ethics, which ruled that Deaver could do the book, but only if he met certain requirements. Among the concerns of the ethics officers was "whether the advances against royalties are so large or of a nature to suggest that [Deaver] would not have received them except for his current position."

Whatever other questions the deal might have raised, that was a no-brainer. Why *else* would anyone buy a diet book by Mike Deaver, except that he worked at the White House? In time, Deaver, under pressure from above, dropped the project and gave back the $9,000.

A few years later, President George Bush, no fan of Deaver-style dealing, used his first executive order to set up a wide-ranging review of executive-branch ethics rules. In April 1989, Bush imposed a total ban on outside income for top White House staff, ordering that "no employee who is appointed by the president . . . shall receive any earned income for any outside employment or activity performed during the presidential appointment." No wiggle room there; in the future, senior White House figures would have to leave the government before cashing in.

Hillary Rodham Clinton by Roman Genn

Until now. Hillary Rodham Clinton's $8 million book contract with Simon & Schuster—444 times larger than *The White House Diet* deal—raises ethical questions similar to those in the Deaver case. But it's not getting the same treatment; this time, the Office of Government Ethics is not investigating. In fact, what criticism the deal has sparked has focused mostly on whether the new senator from New York has violated any *Senate* ethics rules. Seemingly forgotten is that, at all times during the book negotiations and until January 20, Mrs. Clinton is First Lady, a powerful policy-influencing figure in the administration. Would her book bonanza pass even the most minimal White House ethics test?

No, according to several top officials from earlier administrations. "I think we never would have permitted it," says C. Boyden Gray, White House counsel during the George Bush years. "If Ronald or Nancy Reagan, on the eve of their departure, had accepted an $8 million book contract, the dome would have gone off the Capitol, with threats of hearings," says David Martin, former chief of the Office of Government Ethics. And Charles Cooper, who headed the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel from 1985 to 1988, asks simply, "Should someone in a position of such enormous potential influence be beholden in that kind of substantial financial way to any corporate interest?"

But while these men and others question the book deal's propriety, they point out that there is no law forbidding the First Lady from signing the contract and taking the money. Even though there are dozens of ethics rules governing the White House, many of them do not apply to the president or First Lady. The president is exempt because he is elected by the people, and will be held accountable politically if he violates the public trust. The First Lady, on the other hand, is exempt because she is a private citizen.

But is Hillary Rodham Clinton really a private citizen? It's a question that has dogged the White House since Inauguration Day 1993. And for much of that time, the Clintons have argued—sometimes in court—that the First Lady is not only not a private citizen but is actually a de facto government official.

The issue first arose in connection with Mrs. Clinton's health-care task force. The First Lady wanted to keep her group's meetings a secret, but federal law required that any gatherings that included people from outside the government had to be held in public. When a doctors' group sued to open up the meetings, the White House argued that all involved, including the First Lady, were federal officials, and therefore the meetings could remain secret. "The spouse of the president is hardly a private citizen or a regular member of the public," administration lawyers argued. Mrs. Clinton, they said, was "functionally equivalent" to a federal employee.

After her health-care failure, the

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First Lady went into a kind of public hibernation, during which White House aides often suggested that she was not involved in policymaking. But in 1999, when she began to consider a run for the Senate and was eager to highlight her accomplishments, Mrs. Clinton revealed that she in fact played an important role in all sorts of White House policy decisions—only without the fanfare of her earlier initiative. "I continued to work on all the issues I'd always worked on, including health care," she told the *New York Times*. "But I did not assume an additional title and a specific responsibility for an overall policy as I had before."

Given all that, there seems little question that by the administration's own standard the First Lady, as a White House official, is absolutely forbidden from making a book deal until after January 20. Mrs. Clinton seemed to acknowledge as much when she chose to donate money from her 1996 book, *It Takes a Village*, to charity. The book earned about $1 million, which Mrs. Clinton, if she were truly a private citizen, could have kept. She didn't.

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But now she's cashing her check from Simon & Schuster; according to published reports, she may already have received as much as one-third of the advance. Indeed, in late December, the Clintons made an $855,000 down payment on a house in Washington—money that the famously strapped First Couple had to get somewhere. (By the way, even if Mrs. Clinton had arranged for the payments to be made after she left the White House, agreeing to write a book while in office would still be a problem. In 1986, Pentagon official Richard Perle was offered a $300,000 contract to write a novel. Under the terms of the deal, all payments were to be deferred until Perle left the government. It didn't fly; Perle was forced to forego the contract until he was out of office.)

Of course, Mrs. Clinton's ethical transgressions could have been avoided had she simply waited until after January 20 to do the deal. Why didn't she? It appears she was caught in a pincer between her old life in the White House and her new one in the Senate. If she had waited until she was no longer First Lady, she would have been in her third week as a senator, and she might well have worried that signing such a lucrative deal in her first days in office might look worse than doing the same thing in her last days in the White House. If she guessed that ignoring White House ethics rules would cause little public furor, she guessed right.

And now she is refusing to release many details of the deal. But we'll learn at least a little more in the months to come. As a senator, she will have to file financial-disclosure reports—the first one is due in May. For his part, Bill Clinton is required to complete what's known as a termination financial-disclosure form within 30 days of leaving office. In it, he will have to report any spousal income above $1,000 that was received during his last year in the White House. So we'll see what's there.

And what then? Perhaps some purists will continue to complain of the huge profit-taking that took place even before the Clintons left the White House. But the First Lady is betting it won't matter much. She's probably right. **NR**

■ POLITICS II ■

GWB & JQA

One presidential son deserves another

RICHARD BROOKHISER

GEORGE W. BUSH and John Q. Adams are the only sons of presidents to become president, but they seem to have little else in common.

Look at their faces: Bush's wry/dry Texas smirk (*Donchu fool me, brother*), vs. Adams's pulpit glare (*You do not fool me, and you are not my brother*). Look at their minds. Bush's supporters argue—correctly, I believe, but against plausible evidence—that he is not stupid. Adams made Thomas Jefferson look stupid. He was a Harvard professor; when he read the Bible, which he did daily, he had a choice of English, French, German, and Greek versions. His translation of Horace's ode beginning "*Integer vitae scelerisque purus*" is still in print (*Horace in English*, Penguin Classics). When he was secretary of state, he prepared—by himself—a report on the history of weights and measures; he also invented the Monroe Doctrine.

Look, finally, at their temperaments. Bush has a mean streak. But in the charity sweepstakes, Adams is the clear loser. Here is Adams on three presidents he knew. "There are many features in the character of Mr. Van Buren strongly resembling that of Mr. Madison. . . . But Madison had none of his obsequiousness, his sycophancy, his profound dissimulation and duplicity. In the last of these he much more resembles Jefferson, though with very little of his genius. The most disgusting part of his character, his fawning servility, belonged neither to Jefferson nor to Madison." Nice to know you, sir.

W. & Q. are different men, living in different times, which drive them still

Mr. Brookhiser is an NR senior editor. His next book is on the Adamses.

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further apart. But they do share a great bond, beyond being sons of presidents: Both their elections were problematic. The election of 2000 has already joined the election of 1824 on the short list of acrid electoral botches. If Bush studies Adams's example, he can avoid a third resemblance. Adams served one miserable term, partly because of the circumstances of his victory, and Bush's enemies will work to make sure he suffers the same fate. But if he learns from Adams's experience, he can have a better term, and perhaps even a second one.

The election of 1824, which put Q. in the White House, was the original permanent campaign. It began in 1817, immediately after the first inauguration of James Monroe. Monroe was the last president of the founding generation. Beneath him was a tier of younger men, all consumed with the desire to succeed him. Adams, secretary of state; William Crawford, secretary of the treasury; John C. Calhoun, secretary of war; and Henry Clay, Speaker of the House, masterminded their efforts from Washington. Andrew Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, and soon to be conqueror of Florida, hovered hopefully outside the government. These five ambitious men spent four years making unstable alliances and stabbing each other in the back. When Monroe ran (unopposed) for a second term, they redoubled their intrigues.

Tensions rose as Monroe's retirement drew near. Visiting the White House to discuss a list of appointments to the treasury department, Crawford lost his temper, flourished his cane over his head, and called the president a "damned, infernal old scoundrel." Monroe grabbed the fire tongs to defend himself. The quarreling men were separated, but they never spoke again.

Calhoun decided to run for vice president, leaving the field to his four peers. Some states chose electors by popular vote, while others left the choice to their legislatures. The oft-repeated statement that Jackson won the popular vote is thus incomplete: He only won a majority in those states that *held* a popular vote. The tally in the Electoral College was Jackson, 99; Adams, 84; Crawford, 41; and Clay, 37.

In accordance with the Twelfth Amendment, the House, voting by states, picked the winner from the top three candidates. Martin Van Buren's memoirs claimed, sarcastically, that God decided the choice of New York. Stephen Van Rensselaer was the marginal, uncommitted New York congressman. He prayed for divine guidance with closed eyes; opened them to see an Adams ballot on the floor; then cast it. It is a great story; but Adams had been in touch with Van Rensselaer and other fence-sitters, giving them political assurances.

The most important assurance he gave was to Henry Clay, who had fallen from contention because of his fourth-place finish, but was still a power in the House. Clay was an orator, a gambler,

W. & Q. by Roman Genn

and a ladies' man; he and Adams could hardly have been more different. But they had served together as diplomats, and Adams actually disliked him somewhat less than he disliked most people. The two made a deal. When the House voted, Adams won a bare majority of 13 states, including four controlled by Clay; Clay became Adams's secretary of state.

There were no dimpled chads, no lawsuits, no unopened absentee ballots. All had proceeded according to the Constitution. But Jackson's reaction, like Gore's today, was apoplectic. His partisans accused Adams and Clay of making a corrupt bargain. Congressman John Randolph denounced Clay so vehemently that a duel between the men resulted (neither was hurt). The legislature of Jackson's home state, Tennessee, nominated him for a second presidential run more than three years in advance of the next election. When Adams and Jackson met in the rematch of 1828, Jackson won, with 178 electoral votes to 83.

This is the traditional account of the 1824 election: wiliness, leading to popular retaliation. The Democrats will seek to impose that story on the 2000 election and its aftermath. But there was another, even more important reason why Adams served only one term: At some level of his mind, he agreed that the bargain he made was corrupt.

Adams was an adroit politician—a much better one than his father. He had switched parties, from Federalist to Republican, and suppressed his dislike of slavery, so as not to offend the South. He had climbed the greasy pole with considerable skill. But his skill made him ashamed.

The Founders had not envisioned political parties—Madison referred to them sternly as "factions"—and though parties quickly emerged, the Founders thought them temporary and disreputable. John Quincy Adams, son of a Founder, shared his elders' creed. As a result, he was a divided self, doing what he deplored. When he was criticized for winning, he could not fight back, and spent his term in political paralysis.

His diary offers evidence of this. After three and a half miserable years in the White House, Adams wrote that he could "no longer entertain a doubt" that John McLean, his own postmaster general, was engaged in "political treachery. . . . He has been all along a supple tool of the Vice-President, Calhoun, but plays his game with so much cunning and duplicity that I can fix upon no positive act that would justify the removal of him." But why did Adams need a "positive act"? The Post Office was an acknowledged political machine, a tool for doling out patronage. Loyalty was the only qualification of a postmaster general. Any normal politician would have fired McLean in a minute. But who was Adams to punish a disloyal politician, since he had committed the sin of politics himself?

W. will not have this problem; he, and we, do not believe that politics per se is a sin. But he has an analogous problem

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You deserve a factual look at...

The Arabs of Israel

Are they a "persecuted minority?"

The world is once again confronted with violence in Israel and its administered territories. On the pretext of one of Israel's ministers visiting the Temple Mount, the Palestinians erupted in bloody rioting, which has not yet ended and in which hundreds so far have died. Most distressing, Israeli Arabs, citizens

What are the facts?

Israel is a Democratic Country. Israel is an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions co-exist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. About 20% of the population (over one million people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the State in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

> "Contrary to propaganda...the Arabs in Israel enjoy every civil right and have the same status under law as Jewish Israelis"

It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region. There are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high as and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. There are close to 1,000 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 300,000 students—just about 25 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created, Ninety percent of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 5,000 Arab students attend such schools.

Israeli Arabs Enjoy Full Equality in Law and in Fact. All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are administered by their own authorities and protected by the government.

In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and the barbarity of female sexual mutilation. It has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

There is, however, one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states are the avowed enemies of Israel and dedicated to its destruction (there is "peace" with Egypt and Jordan), this exemption is granted by the Israeli government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis, and can freely move all over the country without fear of being harassed, attacked, or killed. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. In a recent poll, 70% of Israel's Arabs declared that they identified with and felt loyalty to the Palestinians, and not to the state of Israel. Significantly, however, the same percentage (70%) declared that they would much prefer to live in Israel than in any other country in the area. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately one million Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2,000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1946—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now over one million Arabs in Israel, many more than after the exodus in 1948 – a manifold increase. That alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

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that could paralyze him, if he lets it: Bush is, as Peggy Noonan puts it, a "love Republican." This is the personal foundation of compassionate conservatism. Love is what he offers, and love is what he hopes to get in return from voters. The week before the election, most tracking polls showed Bush about to get a big dose of it; some commentators, including Noonan, predicted he would win more than 400 electoral votes. What Bush got instead was a kick in the head.

Here two other similarities between Bush and Adams—alcoholism and parental pressure—become relevant. Bush speaks without shame of his past drinking; the D.U.I. story hurt him as little as it did because the issue was already public. Adams too knew the dangers of drink: His two brothers were alcoholics (one of them died of liver failure at age 30); so were two of his three sons (one was a suicide as well as a drunk). Adams himself drank a lot, even by the standards of his day; in his seventies, he correctly identified 11 out of 14 Madeiras at a tasting. Where did all this boozing come from? If alcoholism has a genetic component, the Adams family offers a pretty clear instance of it. But the pressure of ambition and family example—especially when the family contains a president—may also be a factor, for Bush as well as the Adamses. What was it that the anesthetic of the bottle helped Bush forget? My knowledge of the way of the WASP suggests that it was high expectations.

Bush must now be disappointed in his expectation that he will be loved. He won't turn to drink; Christ, he says, has changed that, and we must believe him. But Bush has to understand that his photo finish represents bad luck and hard political realities, not a just punishment for some failing. The Democrats will play to his weakness. When he tries to reform Social Security, they will say he stole the votes of old people in Palm Beach. When he tries to propose innovative programs for the poor, especially the black poor, they will say he chased black voters away from the polls with snarling dogs. Jesse Jackson will be as bellicose as Andrew Jackson; love will be returned with hate.

There are some good political and policy reasons to be a love Republican. W. can love as much as he wants, but the example of Q. should remind him also to kick butt. **NR**

■ **PUBLIC POLICY** ■

(Criminal) Alien Nation

Breaking more laws than one

JOHN J. MILLER

A COUPLE of hours after sundown on October 30, 2000, undercover cop Edward M. Toatley sat in his black Toyota 4Runner, waiting to close a drug deal in a run-down neighborhood of Washington, D.C. He had just driven across town with a suspected drug dealer, Kofi Apea Orleans-Lindsay, handed him $3,500, and watched him disappear into a nearby building. "Here he comes," muttered Toatley a few minutes later, when Orleans-Lindsay returned. In a van about a block away, a surveillance team listened in.

The officers then heard Toatley speak his final words: "Is everything all right?" Next they heard the blast of a gunshot, followed by heavy breathing. They raced to the scene, but Orleans-Lindsay eluded them in a wooded area. Toatley, a Maryland state trooper, died two hours later; Orleans-Lindsay dodged the law for two weeks. But the police caught up with him on November 13 in Brooklyn, N.Y., after he'd been featured twice on the television program *America's Most Wanted*. Now he's facing federal murder charges.

He has also stirred a debate about how this could have happened in the first place: Orleans-Lindsay is a chronic criminal, with two felony convictions over the last three years. What's more, he's an immigrant, from Ghana. He should have come up for deportation proceedings long before he aimed his gun at Toatley. But Orleans-Lindsay slipped through the cracks—and his case shows that those cracks aren't just hairline fractures, but yawning holes. Current deportation laws are occasionally criticized as too harsh, and in some specific cases these criticisms are warranted; but the more important truth is that too often, the laws are not enforced vigorously enough.

Concern about the tie between crime and immigration is nothing new. From the Mafia gangs of the 1920s to the Mariel boatlift of 1980, it is a staple of American history. But it may be based on a misperception. Throughout the 20th century, federal panels and other researchers repeatedly dismissed the connection. "Immigration has not increased the volume of crime to a distinguishable extent, if at all," noted the federal Immigration Commission in 1911, during the height of the Ellis Island influx. "In fact, the figures seem to show a contrary result."

The current evidence suggests that legal immigrants are a bit less prone to criminality than native-born Americans. This conclusion may, in part, be an artifact of lousy recordkeeping, reluctance among immigrants to report crimes to the police, or law enforcement looking the other way. It isn't very easy, after all, to penetrate a crime ring that conducts all its business in Ukrainian or Vietnamese. But it may also be the truth: People willing to transplant themselves across continents and into a new culture probably aren't going to put it all on the line to go shoplifting at Wal-Mart. Some of the evidence suggests that *illegal* immigrants—setting aside the unlawfulness of their very presence—are slightly more prone to criminality than native-born Americans. That would make intuitive sense, because this population is disproportionately young, unmarried, and male. But, again, the data aren't wholly reliable.

Orleans-Lindsay came to the United States legally, as a child and with his family. Now he is a case study in how the Immigration and Naturalization Service routinely fails to track aliens in the criminal-justice system. Although there is fairly regular contact between federal and state prison authorities and the INS, the INS doesn't often reach down into the thousands of county and local jails across the country. When it does, the results aren't very encouraging: A 1998 report by the General Accounting Office looked at a sample of 20,000 criminal aliens and found that the INS had failed to identify 36 percent of them. "In other words, more than 7,000 serious felons were released back into our communi-

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ties," says Daniel Sutherland of the Center for Equal Opportunity. "They should have received one-way tickets to their countries of origin."

Orleans-Lindsay had stayed in a Maryland county prison, but the question of his immigration status was an afterthought. He had been arrested several times, received suspended sentences, and violated repeatedly the terms of his probation. Still, the fact that he was an alien didn't come up in court, and it wasn't until last September that the county asked the INS's Baltimore office about Orleans-Lindsay's immigration status—and it wasn't until four days before the Toatley shooting that the appropriate files were actually hauled out of storage.

Preventing crimes such as Orleans-Lindsay's presents a conundrum for conservatives, because it pits crime control against federalism. The most effective way to guarantee that people like Orleans-Lindsay are deported may be to increase the monitoring of county prisons. Yet this knocks against the principle of local control. This tension is not unique to criminal deportations; it affects many other aspects of immigration as well. Some experts believe, for example, that the best way to prevent illegal immigration is to make sure illegal immigrants can't get jobs in the United States. There has been a bipartisan push in Congress to set up a national worker registry that employers would consult before hiring anybody. The idea has a kind of appeal, assuming it would work properly—until it's likened to forcing small-business owners to seek the permission of a federal bureaucrat for each of their employment decisions. How much freedom are we willing to surrender in order to combat this particular problem?

Further complicating the picture are the headline-grabbing cases in which the deportation rules have proven too harsh. The rules were tightened in 1996, and also made retroactive. The Georgia Board of Pardons and Parolees recently complained about the consequences: "We have seen cases of applicants who have resided in the United States for 30+ years who many years ago committed a minor crime and are now being threatened with deportation." Last year the INS itself protested that the new rules "went too far." There are dozens of stories of people who have deportation proceedings brought against them because they wrote a few bad checks for small amounts long ago, or accepted a misdemeanor charge in a plea bargain.

Unfortunately, these anecdotes—which make for great newspaper stories full of sympathetic victims—have obscured a more significant problem: the federal government's failure to deport many real criminals. The actual number of criminal deportations has more than doubled since 1993, and yet glaring problems remain. There is even a question as to whether deportation is always the best solution: Offenders, after all, can often return through a porous border, and evade lax enforcement. Rafael Resendez-Ramirez is a case in point. An illegal alien from Mexico, he briefly terrified the country by committing at least eight murders near railways in Illinois, Kentucky, and Texas. The FBI searched for him intensively, and he eventually surrendered himself in 1999. He had been deported three times previously, and had gone back to Mexico voluntarily at least nine times after being caught by the Border Patrol.

Deportation, then, is no panacea; but there are some commonsense solutions to the problem of criminal aliens. Enforcing visa time limits and improving border security would help. It may also make sense to pay particular attention to ethnic networks. Just as Cambodians are celebrated for running most of the doughnut shops in California, Nigerians are well known for perpetrating credit-card fraud. Another promising reform would be to change the way immigrants are selected, by emphasizing education and skills over other criteria. "The very process of acquiring and building skills appeals to a person willing to forgo the short-term gratification crime provides; someone who has taken years to become educated and employable at a high level of responsibility is typically not the sort of person who will see crime as a short-cut to riches," writes Carl Horowitz in a forthcoming Center for Immigration Studies report.

The problem, in the end, may not be that we're failing to deport enough criminal aliens—but that we're importing too many in the first place. **NR**

... in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, 1789

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■ PUBLIC POLICY II ■

Energy in the Executive

How to get power to the people

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

We can congratulate ourselves on our good luck in having survived eight years without any national energy policy. The principal events in Bill Clinton's custodianship of the nation's energy have been as follows: the failure to get the job-killing "BTU tax" through Congress in 1993, the failure to foist ethanol on a reluctant public in 1994, the throwing open of nuclear-weapons labs to Chinese military intelligence, and the release of 30 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve last fall.

Only the first of these was a matter of actual policy. The others were aspects of those activities that dominated federal decision-making during the Clinton years: campaigning and fundraising. The ethanol fiasco—Clinton's 1994 executive mandate was ultimately struck down by the federal courts—was driven by the need to appease the farm lobby and major campaign contributor Archer Daniels Midland. The collapse of security at Energy Department labs was made possible by New Class disdain for national-security concerns, but it was also linked to Clinton's pro-Beijing policies and his fundraising approaches to Chinese and overseas-Chinese donors. (The precise nature of the links is exposed in Bill Gertz's recent book, *The China Threat*.) The September 2000 releases from the Strategic Reserve were not in response to any national emergency—the purpose for which the Reserve was established—but rather to assist Al Gore's presidential campaign.

George W. Bush has named former Michigan senator Spencer Abraham his energy secretary. With serious people like Bush and Abraham now in charge, it is reasonable to hope that we shall at last *have* an energy policy; but what *should* a conservative energy policy look like?

Libertarians would no doubt say that it should not look like anything: Energy is a commodity, like potatoes, so let the market take care of it. There is something to be said for this approach. The current electricity crisis in California, for example, has been caused mainly by a half-hearted deregulation of that state's electricity industry—in which wholesale electricity prices (charged by generators like Enron Corporation to local utilities) were deregulated, while retail prices (charged by utilities like Southern California Edison to consumers) remained under state control. This seemed like a good idea to the utilities when they signed on to it in 1996, with wholesale prices low and falling. But four years later, a combination of weather problems and restraints on supply imposed by California's powerful environmental lobbies sent wholesale prices through the roof, and the utilities discovered how shortsighted their calculations had been. At one point last fall, their wholesale suppliers were demanding $1,200 per megawatt-hour—while their consumers (and soon, of course, those consumers' representatives in the state legislature) were expressing fierce resistance to retail prices any higher than $65 per megawatt-hour.

AFP Photo/Stan Honda

Bush's energy man, Spencer Abraham

But while energy perhaps *should* be left to the markets, the extremely political nature of energy generation and distribution ensures that, at present, it *cannot* be. In a free market, energy supply matches itself to energy demand—but in the U.S. today, this can't happen. As the case of California illustrates, public attitudes to electricity pricing are still dominated by Santa Claus economics and environmentalist zealotry. When it comes to fossil-fuel products—gasoline, heating oil—it can't happen for the further reason that most (57 percent) of our oil comes from other countries, and its supply and pricing are therefore tangled up with issues of foreign policy and national defense. (It is not widely known, for example, that 8 percent of our oil currently comes from Iraq, a nation on which we still occasionally drop bombs.)

The new administration, then, will have no choice but to involve itself in energy policy. What should be the direction of that involvement?

A Republican administration should, to begin with, oppose all efforts by legislatures—both state and federal—to hide the realities of electricity pricing from consumers by regulation and market-rigging. It is quite understandable that people do not want to see big new power stations erected in their neighborhoods. It is equally understandable that people do not want to pay high prices for electricity. The two things are, however, connected in a rather obvious way. Environmentalist squeamishness carries a cost, and this cost should be brought to the attention of consumers. If they persist in their NIMBY attitudes, they are then at least doing so rationally, with full understanding of the economic realities.

In fossil-fuel management, we should make the most of our domestic resources. This certainly involves access to the deposits in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which could provide a peak output of 800,000 barrels a day—10 percent of current U.S. production. Bush indicated in the

Mr. Derbyshire is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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campaign debates that he will support opening the area to drilling; Secy. Abraham should follow through on this commitment.

What comes out of the ground, however, is crude oil—useless until refined. The U.S. sorely needs more refining capacity. This is another national need that collides with environmental activism: An oil refinery is just as large, ugly, and smelly as a power station. If consumers want to fill their 5,000-lb. SUVs with inexpensive gasoline, a conservative administration should shun regulation and price-fixing in favor of making consumers confront the real financial and environmental trade-offs involved in that choice.

The administration must also keep an eye on technological developments, so that it can encourage—verbally and through federal purchasing policies—trends that might improve energy supply and reduce costs. In power generation, the most promising innovations are in "micropower"—small, clean, reliable, and cheap technologies. This growth industry is estimated to have attracted nearly $1 billion in venture capital in the year 2000 (up from just $20 million as recently as 1995). Just as the big corporate mainframe computer of the 1970s gave way to a thousand desktop PCs, so the massive, environment-blighting coal-, gas-, or nuclear-fueled power station familiar to us today may yield to a myriad of small local facilities based on fuel-cell, "micro-turbine," or solar-power technologies. A one-kilowatt fuel-cell generator for household use is expected on the market this year. For industrial customers, with requirements in the megawatt range, Siemens Westinghouse hopes to have a fuel-cell generator available in 2004 that will be price-competitive with big traditional power stations.

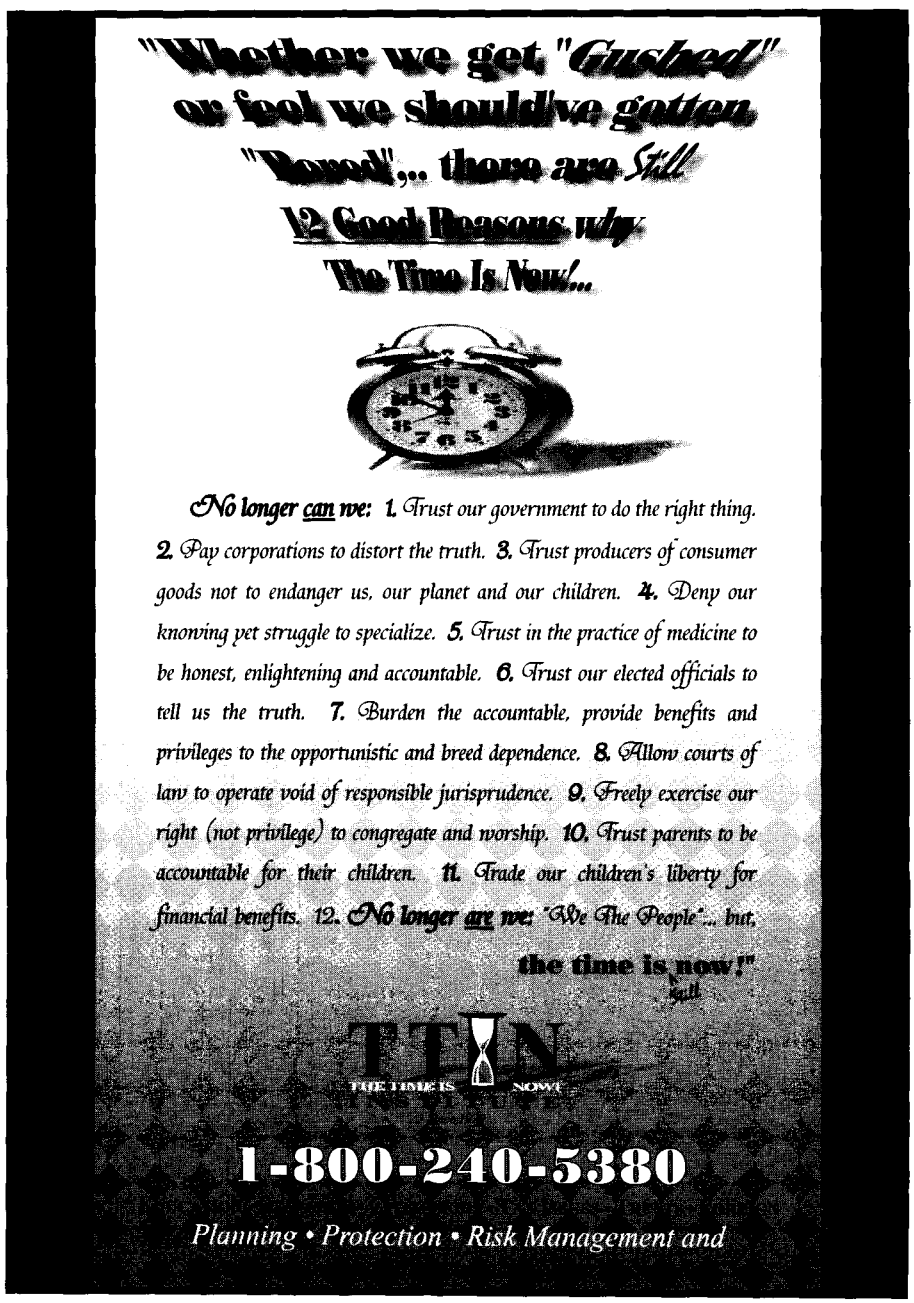
Ours is a power-intensive economy, and becoming more so. The Internet, and all the devices attached to it, consume some 10 percent of all the electricity we produce, and this proportion is rising. That computer on your desk may have its system board marked up in milliamps and microvolts, but there are an awful lot of computers in the U.S., and vast, power-hungry "server farms" connecting them to each other. A Palm Pilot, when conversing with the Internet, is using as much power as a household refrigerator.

■

The world is not going to run out of energy in our lifetimes, nor for many lifetimes to come.

■

Slip that Palm Pilot into your pocket, drive off down the street in your 12-mpg SUV, slow down to admire your neighbor's Christmas lights (up to 300 watts for a full display), and contemplate your energy choices. Calmly, please: The world is not going to run out of energy in our lifetimes, nor for many lifetimes to come—proven oil reserves are sufficient for about 2,000 years at current rates of consumption. There is no cause for panic about energy; a prudent, conservative administration need only favor policies that make it clear to us what our energy choices will cost, in dollars and cents, in environmental degradation, and in freedom of foreign-policy action. We the people, making use of the ingenuity of our inventors and entrepreneurs, will take care of the rest. **NR**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or feel we should've gotten
"Bored"... there are Still
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■ CULTURE WATCH ■

Hollywood's Grinch

It wasn't easy being green

JONAH GOLDBERG

FIRST they came for the museums and the art houses, and we did nothing. Then they came for the universities, and, again, we did nothing. Then they took the publishing houses and newspapers. But then, then, they came for Dr. Seuss—and it was too late.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas recently became the most successful film of 2000. It earned about $220 million in slightly over a month, and could easily end up bringing in $300 million.

Why? It can't be the reviews: *Grinch* was almost universally panned. Clever marketing deserves some of the credit, along with Jim Carrey's marquee value. But a major factor in the movie's success is the story it tells—one that is significantly different from that told in the original 1957 book and its faithful TV-cartoon adaptation of 1966.

The original tale featured a Scrooge-like creature with "termites in his smile" and "garlic in his soul." "You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch," went the song, and that was all we needed to know about him. The neighboring town of Whoville consisted almost entirely of Tiny Tim-like folk who embodied the Christmas spirit. The Grinch hates Christmas, tries to steal Christmas, realizes the error of his ways, loves Christmas: not the most original character arc, but it rhymed well and had its desired effect on two generations of viewers.

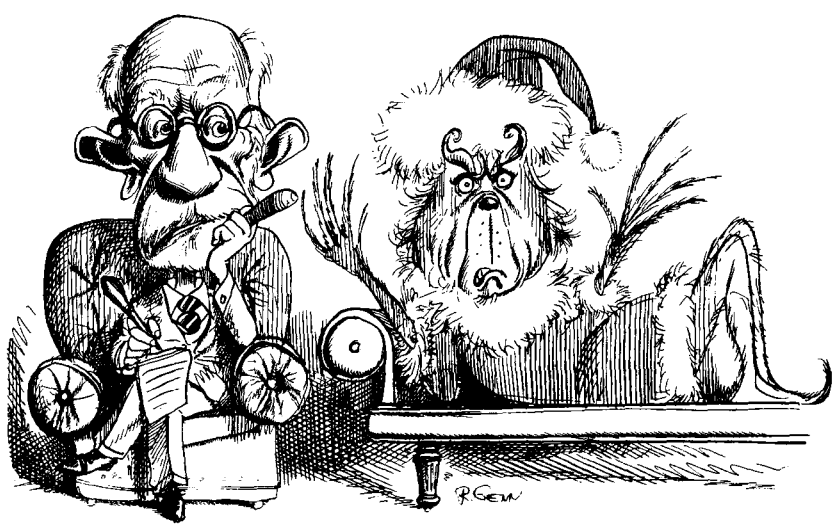
Now comes this movie. In the new telling, the Grinch was horribly wronged by mean-spirited Whovilleans. He was a misunderstood child, raised in an alternative-lifestyle family, and was cast out from the snowy Eden by petty, jealous meanies. It turns out the monochromatic Whovilleans couldn't stomach a child who was green, hairy, and—well—different. The Grinch grew to hate Christmas largely, it seems, because the Whovilleans treated it as an opportunity to show off, with crass light displays, politically motivated festivals, and rank materialism. In this account, the most despicable character is not the Grinch but the vain mayor of Whoville. And while the Grinch does learn quite a bit about Christmas, it turns out the misguided Whovilleans also have much to learn.

But did we really need to know that the Grinch was the victim of a cruel childhood? Did we need a debunking of the "myths" of Whovillean virtue? Did the black-and-white story have to be smudged into shades of gray? Of course: That's what Hollywood does. Indeed, what better vehicle could there be for the exaltation of the individual, the fetishization of the victim, the deconstruction of the "mainstream," than a beloved family entertainment? *Grinch* director Ron Howard is hardly a campus radical, but even he isn't immune to the culture industry's endemic shortcomings—in this case, Hollywood's ingrained inability to understand villainy.

A few years ago, a mild-mannered Columbia professor named Andrew Delbanco wrote a very good book called *The Death of Satan*. His Nietzschean-sounding thesis was that Americans had lost the ability to imagine real evil. We see it all around us, but because of our creative community's intense opposition to religious metaphors, "we feel something that our culture no longer gives us the vocabulary to express." Delbanco called this a "tragedy of the imagination."

How much the average American suffers from this defect of the imagination is debatable, but Delbanco is surely correct that the culture industry has lost the blueprints for straightforward evil: Films are filled with bad guys, but it is almost impossible for the audience to get to know them before learning they're really not that bad after all. Consider, for example, the narrator of the Grinch story: In the 1966 cartoon, it was Boris Karloff. In the film, the responsibility falls to Anthony Hopkins—Hannibal Lecter from *The Silence of the Lambs*. While it may be a nice bit of torch-passing to have one famed horror actor replaced by another, Hannibal Lecter is no old-fashioned bad guy: The serial-killing cannibal is nasty, but also something of an antihero. In *Hannibal*, the sequel novel to *Silence of the Lambs*, we learn that Lecter is the product of a terrible childhood, just like the Grinch, and it's really not his fault that he eats people. And—hooray!—at the end of the book, he gets the girl and lives happily ever after.

Actors and directors, like psychologists and social workers, search for the "motivation" of characters. This search for understanding can segue quickly into explanation, and from there to excuse-making and even sympathetic absolution. This is precisely the phenomenon Delbanco identifies in the larger culture. Consider the seemingly endless supply of books trying to "explain" Hitler, justify Communism, humanize pedophilia, and generally debunk assorted evils or,



By Roman Genn

Mr. Goldberg is editor of National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).

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rather, "evils." Delbanco bemoans this tendency because such efforts rely on radically insufficient, clinical language that falls far short of the religious metaphors we were once free to use in popular discourse. There are few faster ways to identify yourself as a rube in intellectual circles than to use words like "Satanic" or "evil."

Once Hollywood and academia were done overturning our popular history about Indians, the Japanese, Vietnam, etc., is it any wonder that they turned their debunking energies toward *fictional* villains? We've now seen witches and vampires equated with persecuted feminists, sexual minorities, and brave nonconformists. Today, if you say witchcraft is evil, you can expect your faculty-room privileges to be revoked.

The revisionism has reached the Devil himself. Starting around 1997—with *The Devil's Advocate* starring Al Pacino—Hollywood has issued an unprecedented stream of Devil movies. In just the last year, there have been over a dozen, including *Stigmata*, *The Ninth Gate*, and *Bedazzled*. But virtually all of these films make Lucifer either very cool or profoundly mechanical. In several of the movies—*End of Days* and *Bless the Child*, for example—the protagonists fight, and even defeat, the Dark Prince with handguns. As *The American Spectator*'s James Bowman wrote recently, "It seems hardly worth the trouble to bring the Enemy of Mankind onto the stage at all if he is to be disposed of like a clumsy burglar."

In almost all of these movies, the Devil is less the Prince of Lies than just a villain with superpowers. There's one glaring exception: the recent rerelease of 1973's *The Exorcist*. No popular film in the last two decades treats the Devil with more seriousness or subtlety; indeed, it is stunning to watch the film today. We all remember the vomiting and head-spinning, but what stands out now in an age of special effects is the dialogue about the nature of good and evil, the Devil's aim to confuse the two, and the unreliability of modern science in clarifying the issue. Satan is not treated as someone or something that can be reduced to petty human motivations or simplistic ambitions or explanations. He is what he is: a mystery, the omnipresent tempter. He is the Devil—without quotation marks.

It is this willingness to take an evil phenomenon seriously, and to refrain from facile debunking, that is sorely missing in today's culture. If we overrationalize a tradition, it will lose the sentiment that sustains it; if we explain why the Grinch is a Grinch, so that we can "feel his pain," the moral of the story will dissipate like a Who's breath on a cold day.

Theodor Geisel (a.k.a. Dr. Seuss) understood implicitly. He gave the Grinch his motivation but stopped short of overexplaining it. "The Grinch hated Christmas! The whole Christmas season! / Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason."

Unfortunately, Hollywood felt it knew better than Dr. Seuss, and chose to explain away the Grinch; even more unfortunately, American audiences are falling for it. **NR**

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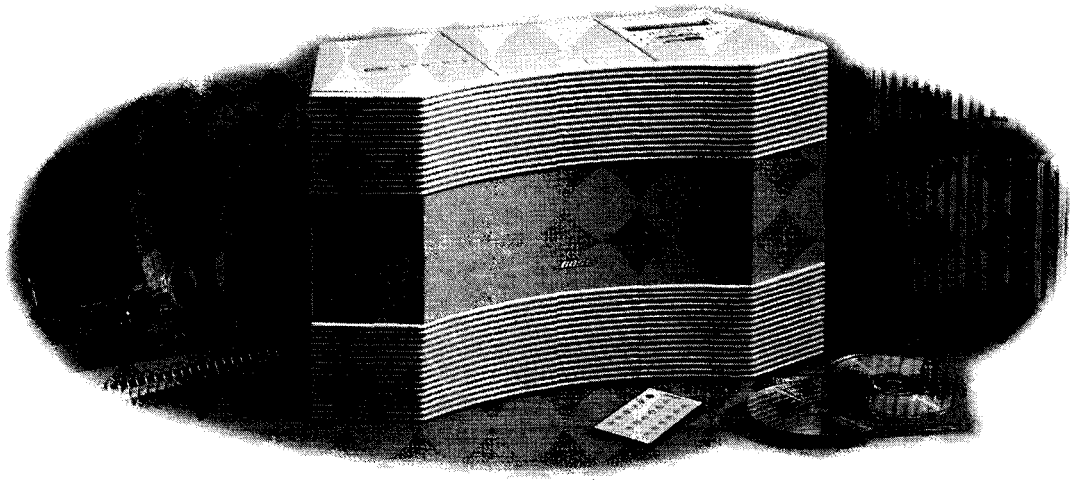

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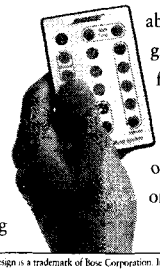

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■ COVER STORY ■

President W.

A success guide

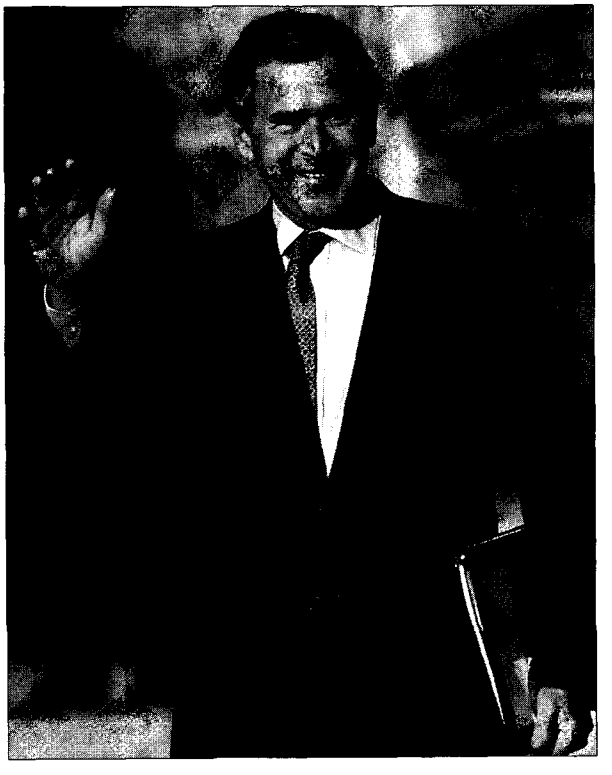
DANIEL CASSE

Is it possible to be a good president in lousy economic times? That might be the biggest question the new Bush presidency faces. Ford, Carter, and Bush *père* are hardly encouraging precedents.

The exception—as usual—is Reagan. His behavior during the first two years of his presidency ought to be George W.'s guide if the economy goes flat.

When Reagan took office, the American economy was still choking on the fumes of the Carter years. In some respects, it got worse: Inflation was tamed, but unemployment soared, entitlements grew, and the stock market tanked. Unfazed, Reagan kept up his steady drumbeat for smaller government, lower taxes, and a massive defense budget.

This drove the voices of "responsible government"—the *Washington Post*, David Stockman, the Brookings Institution—crazy. They insisted that Reagan abandon his reckless ideas and cooperate with Congress. Sometimes they succeeded: He caved and signed a tax increase in 1982. But the instructive point is that Reagan never went around boasting about this compromise. Instead, he took the more manly, presidential approach: He pretended it never happened and went right on talking about the things he cared about.



On Social Security accounts, tax cuts, school vouchers, and military spending, the voices of responsible government—the *Washington Post*, Paul Krugman, the Concord Coalition—will lecture Bush about the necessity of compromise. Sometimes they may be right. But the key to his long-term success is not to make that necessity a virtue. He ought to harp on his boldest proposals, even as they remain far out of reach.

The congressional Republicans got creamed in 1982, as they surely will in 2002. But when the dust settled, Reagan's "reckless ideas" were still very much alive. If Bush stubbornly promotes his agenda, rather than his good-natured deal-making, the best ideas from his campaign might survive our economic doldrums.

—Mr. Casse is a senior director of The White House Writers Group, a public-policy communications firm.

KELLYANNE FITZPATRICK

MOVE quickly and decisively in the first 100 days, to: Undo Clinton's vetoes of the repeal of the death tax and the marriage-penalty tax.

Expand SDI, IRAs, MSAs, NAFTA, and other freedom-friendly acronyms.

Give all workers a refund (formerly called a "tax cut").

It's payback time for the key groups whose extremism helped elect you: labor unions (reinstate the *Beck* decision and repeal Davis-Bacon), trial lawyers (enact tort reform), feminists (ban partial-birth abortions and expand tax credits for adoption).

Beware that "bipartisanship" means "Kumbaya" in some languages.

Take on an issue that galvanizes the nation and invites agreement on Capitol Hill, e.g., curing cancer or Alzheimer's.

End the Justice Department's lawsuits against Microsoft.

Allow people to smoke in your office.

Never utter the words "Clinton" or "Gore"—unless you are on Letterman or Leno.

Before appointing a Democrat, ask if he or she voted for you.

Keep your promises.

Appoint Al Gore ambassador to Chad.

—Kellyanne Fitzpatrick is a Washington pollster.

STEVE FORBES

PRESIDENT BUSH should move fast and be bold. Exciting, purposeful leadership would be the best possible antidote to the Democrat-induced post–Election

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Day rancor. With the economy faltering, a coherent, take-charge approach would be welcome indeed. The new president should propose major cuts in income-tax and capital-gains rates. Broad support already exists for phasing out the death tax, easing the marriage penalty, liberalizing Roth IRAs, eliminating the telephone excise tax, extending the moratorium on targeted Internet taxes, and improving depreciation allowances for small businesses.

Bush and his Treasury secretary should also pressure Alan Greenspan to ease the Federal Reserve's overly tight monetary policy, a major reason the economy is stalling. To prepare the ground for future reforms, the president should also try to enlist outgoing senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Bob Kerrey to head a commission on Social Security, Sen. John Breaux to head a similar panel on Medicare reform, and former U.N. ambassador Andrew Young, who believes in school choice, to chair an education-reform group.

President Bush should also ask for and immediately sign a ban on partial-birth abortions, and move to implement a missile-defense shield by upgrading the Navy's Aegis missile system.

—Mr. Forbes is editor-in-chief of Forbes *magazine.*

JEFFREY HART

On Social Security, Gov. Bush has proposed a limited personal investment of payroll taxes in selected stocks; I think he should consider some other reform models that are available and working. College professors have a plan called TIAA-CREF, a pension fund to which they contribute a monthly portion of their salary. TIAA-CREF invests the money and provides retirement income, with much more impressive returns than Social Security. Bush should also look at the Chilean model, which gives workers the opportunity to choose among three competing investment corporations. Both TIAA-CREF and the Chilean model seem to me more ambitious and desirable than the Bush proposal.

In foreign affairs, Bush should immediately announce withdrawal from the obsolete ABM treaty, and go ahead with the very limited Alaska missile-defense installation. Much more important, he should move forward on building a fleet of Aegis-class destroyers that can patrol the seas and detect missiles as they leave their launch pads; a missile can be destroyed more easily in the early stage of its flight.

Finally, deterrence remains valuable. Bush should quietly inform Iran, Iraq, and other malefactors that if they employ weapons of mass destruction against us, they will—infallibly—be annihilated.

—Mr. Hart is an NR *senior editor.*

JEANE KIRKPATRICK

Some priorities: Like our new president, I choose education first, in part because I know that other opportunities follow after. Providing all young Americans the fundamental skills—reading, writing, speaking, a good knowledge of our country's history, basic values—should be the first goal. Important for all, education is especially important for immigrants, whom we must not only educate, but make Americans.

My second priority is to provide for the common defense with an effective national missile defense, to protect our borders and our population from the various dictators who have managed to steal, beg, and buy weapons of mass destruction that can reach our shores. We also need theater missile defenses that can protect our forces and those of our allies deployed to diverse places. We need as well to upgrade our armed forces, to pay them better, and appreciate them more.

We need to assure the bases of our strength: a strong, growing, viable economy; energy policies that promote production and growth, fueling our nation's industries without making us hostage to foreign dictators. We need policymakers who will not sacrifice our need for heat and transportation to environmental extremism and theories of global warming that deprive Americans of needed resources at reasonable prices.

We need realistic policies and policymakers who will preserve peace and protect our capacity for self-government, and who will not submit Americans to international courts and to laws to which they have never consented.

It would be wonderful as well to eliminate dread diseases, cure disabilities, produce plentiful supplies of medicines, and spread democratic institutions around the world. We can work on it.

—Jeane Kirkpatrick, a former ambassador to the United Nations, is a scholar, teacher, and writer.

LAWRENCE KUDLOW

Growth, growth, growth. As the stock market sinks and the economy slows, W. can build a strong mandate to govern—and a high approval rating—with the unifying bipartisan theme of restoring economic growth and prosperity. Right from the start, in his inaugural speech, Bush should lay out an economic-recovery program whose centerpiece is lower marginal tax rates, retroactive to January 1, 2001, to spur the sluggish economy and revitalize the sagging spirits of entrepreneurship.

W. should not listen to the ignorant media pundits and other knuckleheads who favor massive budget surpluses created by huge personal tax overpayments. The taxes are dragging down the economy, so W. should expand his tax-cut plan into a full-scale reform of the tax system—reducing personal brackets to 10 and 20 percent; eliminating the capital-gains, estate, and corporate taxes; and transforming Social Security into a privately owned defined-contribution plan.

Also, W. should appoint people to the Federal Reserve who favor a stable-dollar price rule, not rising unemployment; and all regulatory disciples of Joel Klein and David Boies should be fired.

—Mr. Kudlow is an NR *contributing editor.*

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JAY NORDLINGER

STICK to your agenda: tax reform, Social Security reform, Medicare reform, tort reform, education reform, military reform. Stick to it unswervingly. Do exactly what you said you would do, in the long months of the campaign. Your stated agenda is your lodestar. Follow it, and you'll be great. Stray from it, and you'll find trouble. Especially: Continue to be brave on Social Security reform. This is vital for the nation; it will transform us in wonderful ways. It could be what you're remembered for. And build missile defense—this, too, is vital, and something to be remembered for.

A final thing: Not that you're vulnerable to this, but don't try to make "them"—the liberal elites—like you. They won't. And if they do, it means you'll have pulled a Souter—don't want that. To heck with the elite media, and all the other fancy people. They hated Reagan ferociously. And now the world appreciates and loves him. You're a master at being yourself—no time to stop now.

—Mr. Nordlinger is NR*'s managing editor. For the last month and a half of the general election, he was on leave from the magazine to work on Gov. Bush's staff.*

GROVER NORQUIST

ONE key reason the Democrats came close to winning this election is that the party benefited from hundreds of millions of dollars of coerced—and unreported—labor-union dues. But the Supreme Court ruled in its 1989 *Beck* decision that labor unions could not legally spend their members' dues on anything other than negotiating and maintaining labor contracts, unless they got advance, annual written permission from union members.

President Bush signed an executive order in 1992 to begin to enforce this decision; Clinton repealed it. Gov. Bush has promised to reinstitute that executive order; he should do so. He should also make sure that all appointees to the Labor Department and the National Labor Relations Board support workers' rights under *Beck*.

The president should also announce that for three months any American who came forward to the FBI and signed an affidavit confessing to voter fraud—college students voting at home and at school, felons voting, etc.—would receive a full pardon; voter fraud uncovered afterwards would be prosecuted. This measure would expose the true extent of Democratic voter fraud—and create momentum for reform.

—Mr. Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.

KATE O'BEIRNE

HOUSE majority whip Tom DeLay is your most valuable asset in Congress. This opinion isn't confined to admirers of the courageous conservative stalwart; his importance to the success of your legislative agenda is recognized across the ideological spectrum. The *New York Times* is so eager to head off a productive relationship between you and the most effective whip in memory that it recently attacked him on its op-ed page three times in one week. The columnists-of-record wonder how a nice compassionate-conservative guy like you could keep company with such a "vicious" and "mean-spirited" partisan. Their writings are intended to scare you off. If you were to plead irreconcilable differences with DeLay, you would be divorced from your conservative base—which would delight the press.

President-elect Bush, the repeated attacks on DeLay are a tribute to his remarkable success in building a winning team with the slimmest GOP majority. He has earned his colleagues' confidence, and the conservative movement's trust and gratitude. Call on him early and often, and you'll learn what his critics know and fear: DeLay delivers.

—Kate O'Beirne is NR*'s Washington editor.*

JOHN PODHORETZ

GOV. BUSH has already hinted that he would, as president, try to isolate the most popular chunks of his platform, like estate-tax repeal, and get them through Congress quickly. That's canny politics, but since these successes are expected, they will be discounted. So his best hope in his first year is not in domestic policy, but in foreign affairs, where—with bold and visionary action—he can quickly alter his image as a lightweight.

He should propose the expansion of the North American Free Trade Agreement to Chile—reminding Americans of the Republican party's economic internationalism. Turning toward Europe, he should advocate the expansion of NATO into Slovenia and Romania—thus embracing the robust political internationalism and commitment to democracy that helped make the Reagan presidency such a success. Continuing the democracy theme, he should abandon the Clinton administration's fetish of "evenhandedness" in the Israeli–Palestinian dispute and side firmly with our democratic ally in the Middle East—precisely because it is our democratic ally, and therefore more worthy of American support than Arafat's dictatorship by terror. These initiatives will allow Bush to rise above the Washington fray and take his place as a world leader.

—Mr. Podhoretz, a former Reagan speechwriter, is a columnist for the New York Post.

RUSS SMITH

BUSH will enter office as the most underestimated president of modern times: This is a political reality he can use to his advantage. In his inaugural speech, he should pull a JFK and include a "man on the moon"-style uplifting goal. During his first year, he must be audacious. A purchase of part of Russia would fit the bill, perhaps a portion of Siberia; the country would applaud a Jeffersonian move like that. Billy Dale should be given an honorary ambassadorship. Immediate tax relief is a must, given the probable recession; if Democrats balk, they must be demonized. Finally, it's essential that Bush's attorney general take care of all unfinished business concerning the Clinton/Gore administration's

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illegal activities. No mercy; prosecute not out of vengeance, but because it's necessary that Americans realize that justice is being restored to the country. Quick action to overturn the Microsoft travesty would also be a pointed signal that Bush plans to be an activist president.

—*Mr. Smith writes the "Mugger" column for his* New York Press.

PAUL WEYRICH

I KNOW you wish to unite the country and not divide it, and I know you will do your best to reach across the aisle to work with Democrats. But you must also realize that there is an element that is out to destroy you and your party. The Clinton-Gore administration was the most corrupt in American history: They found new ways to subvert the law and undermine the Constitution. I know you would prefer to just put aside what happened these past eight years, but for the sake of your own survival and the country's, you can't do that.

Your attorney general needs to be dedicated to punishing those responsible for the corruption. You can initiate a new investigation every other week. This will keep many of your opponents off balance. Many of these radicals have big plans to render a Bush administration totally ineffective; you can turn the tables, and do the nation a great service, by sending them to prison where they belong. This is no contradiction to compassionate conservatism; it's compassionate to law-abiding people who have watched their nation's laws being systematically shredded by these outlaws.

—*Mr. Weyrich is president of the Free Congress Foundation.*

This We Must Do

The conservative duty to self-government

RAMESH PONNURU

ONLY half the eligible population now votes in American presidential elections, and even fewer vote in off-year elections. There are two schools of thought about what the decline in voter turnout says about the public mood. One holds that it reflects public contentment: People are basically satisfied and see no need to run to the polls to change things. The other school holds that low turnout is a symptom of alienation from government: People are too cynical about politics and politicians to think that it makes much difference who wins. This explanation comes in several shadings. In some versions, people feel helpless to affect their government; in others, they feel no "connection" to what politicians are saying.

The two schools of thought overlap with broader political categories. The party of complacency is, for the most part, the party of conservatism as well. Liberal worrywarts dominate the second school. These days, they offer campaign-finance reform as a solution to the problem they have identified.

What is often overlooked is that the second explanation is basically the same as the first, but with an additional psychological overlay of self-deception. People who say all politicians are the same are generally people who don't know

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the differences among them. Often, the very same people who say there's not a dime's worth of difference between the parties go on to say in their next breath that the parties are too extreme and need to compromise. People deploy these clichés to rationalize their inattention to politics. The pose is an indulgence by people who live in a country where they can afford to indulge. Public alienation is a perverse tribute to public satisfaction.

THE ROOTS OF CONSERVATIVE COMPLACENCY

There's a lot for the public to be satisfied about right now. The nation is at peace. The economy has been booming for 17 years, with only the briefest and mildest of interruptions. Inflation has been conquered. Ordinary Americans are getting richer, living longer, and eating better than ever before. They live lives, as Tom Wolfe recently remarked, that "would have made the Sun King blink." More and more of our money can be spent on entertainment. And such a dazzling array of entertainments is on offer! (Would the Lincoln–Douglas debates have drawn a crowd if they had had to compete with Internet porn?) Our satisfactions are not merely material. Crime used to rise every year, and people got used to thinking that this was inevitable. Now it's declining. New York City is livable again. Rates of illegitimacy and abortion are down, too.

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It would be a mistake to think of the damage that depoliticization does to conservatism as merely episodic.

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For most of the last century, American politics was dominated by crisis. The Depression wasn't over when World War II began, and that war had hardly ended when the Cold War started. More recently, we went through Vietnam, Watergate, stagflation, the crime wave, the Gulf War. During this long era, politicians used the rhetoric of crisis, and often specifically of war, to justify expansions of state power. That rhetoric is less powerful in the post-crisis era, as Bill Clinton learned when he tried to enact a sweeping plan to solve a "health-care crisis." Oddly, Republicans—who became the minority party as soon as the crisis era began, and achieved parity as soon as it ended—were slower to learn the lesson. In the absence of a crisis, the changes they advocated—such as cutting government and ousting a president—seemed drastic. Clinton, meanwhile, played to the public's antipolitical mood, and encouraged it, with a politics of trivia and triangulation. Time and again, he presented himself as a would-be unifier who wanted only to end the bickering in Washington.

Many conservatives think public disengagement from politics is something to be applauded. They say that the public's ignoring of (and ignorance of) politics is proof that it has sound priorities. People don't pay attention to politics, they say, because they're doing more important things—running businesses, raising families. This argument, strangely enough, is often made by conservatives who dedicate most of their own waking hours to politics. One rarely gets the sense that they think their work is unimportant.

And they are right not to think so. The antipolitical impulse may be understandable after a century of total politicization. Conservatives rightly insist on the limits of politics: An election in America is never a choice between alternative civilizational destinies, and thank God for it. But the conservative aversion to politics is excessive; it undermines the prospects of a politically viable conservatism in all kinds of ways; and it endangers self-government. We should stop being complacent about complacency.

What accounts for conservative complacency? Flattery of the public comes naturally in a democracy, of course. But conservatives' denigration of politics has deeper roots than that. It has often been remarked that smart, talented conservatives go into business rather than politics. That is one manifestation of conservative antipolitics. A more serious one is right-wing utopianism. Utopia is the negation of politics; that is indeed part of what makes it utopian. Libertarians are particularly prone to devising blueprints for the ideal state. (This falls short of full-fledged utopianism, which seeks to remake the whole of society and has a nasty tendency to turn murderous when society does not cooperate in being remade.)

But conservatives of all stripes fall prey to the same temptation when they present their program as a set of Platonic abstractions disconnected from the actual circumstances that happen to obtain in the country in which they are to be implemented. One sometimes got the sense that Steve Forbes would have been advocating a flat tax and private investment of pension funds if he were running for president of Albania. All too often, conservatives advocate policies before they have figured out the ends of those policies, let alone set priorities among them.

They claim Ronald Reagan as their guiding spirit, but, as John O'Sullivan has observed, they overstate the ideological character of his politics. He set out not to realize conservative philosophy but to apply it to the specific challenges confronting America. Stagflation was met by tax cuts and sound money, Soviet aggression by a defense buildup and a tougher foreign policy, the "energy crisis" by deregulation. Reagan's project was intensely practical. Conservatives' failure to follow his example is one reason their think tanks seem to exert less influence on politicians than they used to.

A failure to think politically also underlay some of conservatives' worst recent blunders. Newt Gingrich managed to convince many Republicans, not least himself, that the triumph of conservatism was inevitable. (It had been written on a silicon chip.) Inevitability is a close cousin to utopianism, and it led to what we've all been taught hubris leads to. A different kind of misguided faith animated Republicans during Clinton's sex-and-perjury scandal: a naïve legalism. When the story broke, their initial reaction was to keep quiet. Behind closed doors, they counseled patience while independent counsel Kenneth Starr built his legal case. They (with the honorable exception of William

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Bennett) built no political case themselves, and Starr could not do so by virtue of his office. The Clintons, however, made the White House a war room.

It should be noted in the Republicans' defense that the institution of the independent counsel lent itself to legalism. The institution was premised on the notion that holding the executive branch to the rule of law requires insulation from politics. But how to get rulers to abide by rules is ultimately a political question. Arguably, it is *the* political question. It was certainly one that exercised the Founders. They designed a political system that, they hoped, would restrain arbitrary power—that is to say, a system in which the restraint would come through the political process. Kenneth Starr, for all his virtues, was a poor substitute for political accountability.

It would be a mistake, however, to think of the damage that depoliticization does to conservatism as merely episodic. It deprives conservatism, more basically, of strategists. Republicans, of course, do not lack for clever strategists, but these mavens aren't especially conservative. There are principled Republicans, but they tend to prefer to hold their hands above the pure blue flame of principle rather than to devise a strategy by which their principles could actually prevail. They don't think about the constituencies their policies create. They take people off the tax rolls and fund social programs, heedless of the long-run political consequences of making people more dependent on government, and of making government services seem free of charge. Liberals use such policies to create the conditions for their own future success. Conservatives don't.

Instead of a serious politics, conservatives turn to primal-scream therapy and escapist fantasies (think Alan Keyes). Or they drop out of politics altogether, telling themselves that strengthening civil society is more important—as though politics and culture occupied separate, hermetically sealed boxes. When the Promise Keepers held a big rally in Washington a few years back, their spokesmen were at pains to disavow any political intent. But then, why not rally in New York—or Butte?

CAN AN APATHETIC REPUBLIC SURVIVE?

The depoliticization of the culture is part of the feminization of the culture: It is a turn to home and hearth. Finally, the Republicans have produced a politician who acts as though he understands these trends: George W. Bush. Unfortunately, he accommodates them instead of resisting them. His emphasis on compassion appeals to a sentimental country; and his promises to be a soothing "uniter" and never to embarrass us are reassuring to a public that wishes to pay even less attention to politics than it does now.

But, as Bill Buckley pointed out years ago, you can ignore the Great Society, but it won't ignore you. A people that has lost interest in its government will still have one. It may be efficient, mild, and even responsive to popular desires—but it won't be a republic. The public's antipolitical inclinations have already let a president escape accountability for lawlessness ("they all do it"; "it's time to move on"). Constitutional forms may endure, but we appear to be losing the habits of mind that sustain them. About politics, the public is both paranoid and (therefore) credulous. Propaganda campaigns can turn them against the manufactured villains of the moment, be they tobacco companies or vast right-wing conspiracies.

■

If the people will not govern themselves through their elected representatives, someone else will step in to govern them.

■

Legislatures will be at a disadvantage in propaganda wars. The executive has a unified voice and a famous leader; the judiciary has influential constituencies prepared to defend its prerogatives and insulate it from criticism. The Founders thought that the legislature should be the most powerful branch of government; they did not make it the subject of the first article of the Constitution by happenstance. But legislatures have steadily lost (and all too often, freely given) ground to judges and bureaucrats. If the people will not govern themselves through their elected representatives, someone else will step in to govern them.

At its too infrequent best, John McCain's campaign sought to vindicate self-government as a matter of patriotism. His invocations of Teddy Roosevelt were both a reassertion of masculinity and a move from the private virtues of the home to the public virtues of TR's "arena." McCain's error was to think that the chief threat to self-government comes from "special interests" that secure unfair advantages for themselves in the fine print of telecommunications bills. It gradually became clear that his real complaint was not with dirty politics but with politics itself, or at least the compromises and criticisms that necessarily accompany politics. His solution was to have bureaucrats impose fussy regulations on politics: a far cry from the self-government envisioned in the Constitution.

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR CONSERVATISM

Yet the Constitution's vision is precisely the kind of self-government that a properly political conservatism should espouse. In its policy preferences, this self-government would look very much like today's conservatism, but its themes, emphases, and arguments would be different.

It would defend American sovereignty against supranational bodies, on the grounds that we desire to govern ourselves. It would maintain a strong defense, for the same reason (missile defense, which would protect us from nuclear blackmail, very much included). It would reform entitlements, both fiscal and legal: because the people are to be the masters of the government, not its dependents; because entitlements mask trade-offs that should be subject to democratic deliberation; and because Americans should be grateful to their country, not demanding of it. A conservatism oriented to self-government would shrink the feder-

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al government for similar reasons, and because a less sprawling government would be more accountable.

But while shrinking the state, this conservatism would also seek to impress the public with a sense of the majesty of government—because a public that does not respect its government's awesome powers will not hesitate to make it a domestic servant, forgetting that it is "a dangerous servant and a terrible master." A politicized conservatism would try, through example and argument, to vindicate the role of reason and deliberation in public affairs. America was founded to prove that a people could be governed by reflection and choice—not accident and force, or sentiment and whim. If this conservatism were to favor term limits, it would favor them as a means of enhancing, not weakening, the authority and deliberative character of government.

It would also be much more serious than conservatives have been thus far about reclaiming the Constitution from the courts. Instead of relying on appointees to restrain the judiciary from within, conservatives would demand that the other branches impose restraints (consistent with the Constitution) from without.

Conservatives interested in self-government would also redouble their resistance to multiculturalism, a fight that compassionate conservatives such as President-elect Bush seem prepared to abandon altogether. Multiculturalism presents itself as a democratic movement—a way of including multiple races in a democratic order. In reality, it denies the possibility of multiracial democracy. For a democracy to work, its members must feel that they belong to the same community, must believe that there is a common good embracing them, and must be able to communicate with one another so as to identify that common good. Multiculturalism insists that different groups cannot understand one another, regards the idea of "common interests" as an ideological fiction that disguises the reality of oppression by the dominant group, and promotes linguistic apartheid. It encourages Americans to think of themselves as a collection of peoples rather than as a people.

In a society so divided, peace is achievable—but only if a ruling elite brokers the terms of racial pluralism. A few years ago, Cokie Roberts, a fixture of the Washington establishment, expressed dismay at the criticisms then being made of professional politicians—on the telling grounds that America, lacking a common culture or language, is held together only by its political institutions. This is not a self-image appropriate to the ruling class of a democratic nation.

Citizenship in a democracy is a public office; politics, therefore, cannot be indifferent to the character of the citizenry. (We speak of America's "founding" as a nation, not just as a state, because the Founding was a political choice to have a certain national character and not merely to create certain institutions.) The success of democracy depends on a citizenry that is economically independent and mindful of posterity; democratic politics should, therefore, encourage such goods as marriage and investment. Cultural cohesion, a family-oriented morality, and economic self-reliance: These national character traits are prerequisites for the success of self-government and, not coincidentally, of conservatism as well.

The proposal that conservatism should take the health of self-government as its central contemporary concern will strike some as strange. Conservatism has historically been ambivalent, at best, about democracy. That ambivalence is warranted: Democracy is prone to its own corruptions and weaknesses, and to be loved well must be loved moderately. Should we govern ourselves? One answer to this question is that the question has already been decided: Self-rule is the fundamental law handed down to us. If that answer is too homely, we should consider the wisdom, and deep conservatism, of Churchill's remark that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others. Elites will rule in any society, but their rule will be lighter to the degree that they are chosen by a public that has less time, ability, or inclination to make mischief than the elites themselves do. It is hard to imagine another system that would yield a social order that is nobler, more just, more decent, or—in any worthwhile sense—freer.

Self-government is demanding. It would be difficult enough to prevent the erosion of its philosophical and practical foundations even if there were not formidable ideological threats arrayed against it. But coming to the defense of embattled institutions and ways of life is the conservative vocation. Self-government is what, in our day, needs to be defended from external attack and internal decay—to be, in a word, conserved. **NR**

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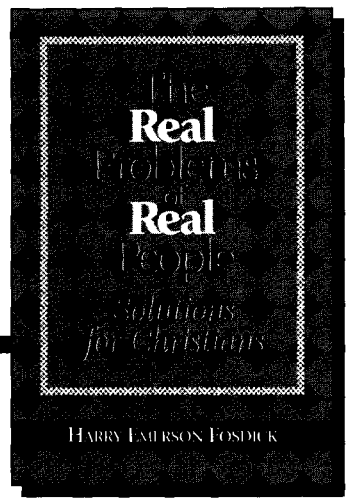

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Staying Human

The danger of techno-utopia

DINESH D'SOUZA

We are as gods, and we might as well get good at it.
—Kevin Kelly, author and techno-utopian

THE most important technological advance of recent times is not the Internet, but rather the biotech revolution—which promises to give us unprecedented power to transform human nature. How should we use that power? A group of cutting-edge scientists, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals has a bold answer. This group—I call them the techno-utopians—argues that science will soon give us the means to straighten the crooked timber of humanity, and even to remake our species into something "post-human."

One of the leading techno-utopians is Lee Silver, who teaches molecular biology at Princeton University. Silver reports that biotechnology is moving beyond cloning to offer us a momentous possibility: designer children. He envisions that, in the not too distant future, couples who want to have a child will review a long list of traits on a computer screen, put together combinations of "virtual children," decide on the one they want, click on the appropriate selection, and thus—in effect—design their own offspring. "Parents are going to be able to give their children . . . genes that increase athletic ability, genes that increase musical talents . . . and ultimately genes that affect cognitive abilities."

But even this, the techno-utopians say, is a relatively small step: People living today can determine the genetic destiny of *all* future generations. Some writers, including physicist Stephen Hawking, have suggested that genetic engineering could be used to reduce human aggression, thus solving the crime problem and making war less likely. James Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, argues that if biological interventions could be used to "cure what I feel is a very serious disease—that is, stupidity—it would be a great thing for people." Silver himself forecasts a general elevation of intellectual, athletic, temperamental, and artistic abilities so that we can over time create "a special group of mental beings" who will "trace their ancestry back to homo sapiens," but who will be "as different from humans as humans are from the primitive worms with tiny brains that first crawled along the earth's surface."

These ideas might seem implausible, but they are taken very seriously by some of the best minds in the scientific community. The confidence of the techno-utopians is based on stunning advances that have made cloning and genetic engineering feasible. In theoretical terms, biotechnology crossed a major threshold with James Watson and Francis Crick's 1953 discovery of the structure of DNA, but practical applications were slow in coming. In 1997, an obscure animal-husbandry laboratory in Scotland cloned a sheep named Dolly; today, the knowledge and the means of cloning human beings already exist, and the only question is whether we are going to do it. And why stop there? As the scientific journal *Nature* editorialized shortly after the emergence of Dolly, "The growing power of molecular genetics confronts us with future prospects of being able to change the nature of our species."

In 1999, neurobiologist Joe Tsien boosted the intelligence of mice by inserting extra copies of a gene that enhances memory and learning; these mouse genes are virtually identical to those found in human beings. Gene therapy has already been successfully carried out in people, and now that the Human Genome Project has made possible a comprehensive understanding of the human genetic code, scientists will possess a new kind of power: the power to design our children, and even to redesign humanity itself.

THE HITLER SCENARIO

The fact that these things are possible does not, of course, mean that they should be done. As one might expect, cloning and genetic engineering are attracting criticism. The techno-utopians have not yet made their products and services available to consumers; but one can reasonably expect that a society that is anxious about eating genetically modified tomatoes is going to be vastly more anxious about a scheme to engineer our offspring and our species.

A recent book communicating that sense of outrage is Jeremy Rifkin's *The Biotech Century*. Rifkin alleges that we are heading for a nightmarish future "where babies are genetically designed and customized in the womb, and where people are identified, stereotyped and discriminated against on the basis of their genotype." How can living beings be considered sacred, Rifkin asks, if they are treated as nothing more than "bundles of genetic information"? Biotechnology, he charges, is launching us into a new age of eugenics. In Rifkin's view, the Nazi idea of the superman is very much alive, but now in a different form: the illusion of the "perfect child."

Although Rifkin has a propensity for inflammatory rhetoric, he is raising some important concerns: The new technology is unprecedented, so we should be very cautious in developing it. It poses grave risks to human health. Cloning and genetic engineering are unnatural; human beings have no right to do this to nature and to ourselves.

These criticisms meet with derision on the part of the techno-utopians. Every time a major new technology is developed, they say, there are people who forecast the apocalypse. The techno-utopians point out that the new technology will deliver amazing medical benefits, including cures for genetic diseases. How can it be ethical, they ask, to withhold these technologies from people who need and want them?

Lee Silver, the biologist, is annoyed at critics such as Rifkin who keep raising the specter of Hitler and eugenics. "It is

Mr. D'Souza, a research scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is author of the new book *The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno-Affluence*, from which this article is adapted. His website is dineshdsouza.com.

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individuals and couples, not governments, who will seize control of these new technologies," Silver writes. The premise of the techno-utopians is that if the market produces a result, it is good. In this view, what is wrong with the old eugenics is not that it sought to eliminate defective types and produce a superior kind of being, but that it sought to do so in a coercive and collectivist way. The new advocates of biotechnology speak approvingly of what they term "free-market eugenics."

The champions of biotechnology concede that cloning and genetic engineering should not be permitted in human beings until they are safe. But "safe," they say, does not mean "error-free"; it means safe compared with existing forms of reproduction. And they are confident that the new forms of reproduction will soon be as safe as giving birth the natural way.

The techno-utopians are also not very concerned that the availability of enhancement technologies will create two classes in society, the genetically advantaged and the genetically disadvantaged. They correctly point to the fact that two such classes exist now, even in the absence of new therapies. Physicist Freeman Dyson says that genetic enhancement might be costly at first, but won't remain permanently expensive: "Most of our socially important technologies, such as telephones, automobiles, television, and computers, began as expensive toys for the rich and afterwards became cheap enough for ordinary people."

The Perfect Child? by Roman Genn

Dyson is right that time will make genetic enhancements more widely available, just as cars and TV sets are now. But the poor family still drives a secondhand Plymouth while the rich family can afford a new Porsche. This may not be highly significant when it comes to cars, because both groups can still get around fairly well. What about when it comes to genetic advantages conferred at birth? Democratic societies can live with inequalities conferred by the lottery of nature, but can they countenance the deliberate introduction of biological alterations that give some citizens a better chance to succeed than others?

The techno-utopians have not, to my knowledge, addressed this concern. They emphasize instead that it is well established in law, and widely recognized in society, that parents have a right to determine what is best for their children. "There are already plenty of ways in which we design our children," remarks biologist Gregory Stock. "One of them is called piano lessons. Another is called private school." Stock's point is that engineering their children's genes is simply one more way in which parents can make their children better people.

Some people might find it weird and unnatural to fix their child in the same way they fix their car—but, say the techno-utopians, this is purely a function of habit. We're not used to genetic engineering, so it seems "unnatural" to us. But think about how unnatural driving a car seemed for people who previously got around on horses and in carriages. "The smallpox virus was part of the natural order," Silver wryly observes, "until it was forced into extinction by human intervention." Diseases and death are natural; life-saving surgery is unnatural.

NOT SACRED AFTER ALL?

Nor are the techno-utopians worried about diminishing the sanctity of human life because, they say, it isn't intrinsically sacred. "This is not an ethical argument but a religious one," says Silver. "There is no logic to it." Biologist David Baltimore, a Nobel laureate, argues that "statements about morally and ethically unacceptable practices" have no place in the biotechnology debate "because those are subjective grounds and therefore provide no basis for discussion." Silver and Baltimore's shared assumption is that the moralists are talking about *values* while they, the hard scientists, are dealing in *facts*.

In this view, the subjective preferences of those who seek to mystify human life do not square with the truths about human biology taught by science. The cells of human beings, Silver points out, are not different in their chemical makeup from the cells of horses and bacteria. If there is such a thing as human dignity, Silver argues, it derives exclusively from *consciousness*, from our ability to perceive and apprehend our environment. "The human mind," Silver writes, "is much more than the genes that brought it into existence." Somehow the electrochemical reactions in our brain produce consciousness, and it is this consciousness, Silver contends, that is the source of man's autonomy and power. While genes fully control the activity of all life forms, Silver writes that in human beings "master and slave have switched positions." Consciousness enables man to complete his dominance over nature by prevailing over his human nature. Silver concludes that, in a bold assertion of will, we can defeat the program of our genes, we can take over the reins of evolution, we can choose the genetic code we want for our children, and we can collectively determine the future of our species.

This triumphant note is echoed by many techno-utopians. Biotech, writes journalist Ronald Bailey, "will liberate future generations from today's limitations and offer them a much wider scope of freedom." Physicist Gregory Benford is even more enthusiastic: "It is as though prodigious, bountiful Nature for billions of years has tossed off variations on its themes like a careless, prolific Picasso. Now Nature finds that one of its casual creations has come back with a piercing, searching vision, and its own pictures to paint."

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These are ringing statements. But do they make sense? Clearly there are many problems with Silver's definition of human dignity as based in consciousness. Animals are conscious; do they deserve the same dignity as human beings? Moreover, are human beings entitled to dignity only when they are conscious? Do we lose our right to be respected, and become legitimate subjects for discarding or medical experiments, when we fall asleep, or into a coma? Surely Silver would disavow these conclusions. They do, however, flow directly from his definition, which is, in fact, just as heavily freighted with values as are the statements of his opponents.

There is, behind the proclamations of scientific neutrality, an ideology that needs to be spelled out, a techno-Nietzschean doctrine that proclaims: We are molecules, but molecules that know how to rebel. Our values do not derive from nature or nature's God; rather, they arise from the arbitrary force of our wills. And now our wills can make the most momentous choice ever exercised on behalf of our species: the choice to reject our human nature. Why should we remain subject to the constraints of our mortality and destiny? Wealth and technology have given us the keys to unlimited, indeed godlike, power: the dawn of the post-human era.

What is one to make of all this? In many respects, we should celebrate the advent of technologies that enable us to alleviate suffering and extend life. I have no problem with genetic therapy to cure disease; I am even willing to endorse therapy that not only cures illness in patients but also prevents it from being transmitted to the next generation. Under certain circumstances, I can see the benefits of cloning. The cloning of animals can provide organs for transplant as well as animals with medicinal properties ("drugstores on the hoof"). Even human cloning seems defensible when it offers the prospect of a biological child to married couples who might not otherwise be able to have one.

CREATING THE PERFECT CHILD

But there is a seduction contained in these exercises in humanitarianism: They urge us to keep going, to take the next step. And when we take that step, when we start designing our children, when we start remaking human beings, I think we will have crossed a perilous frontier. Even cloning does not cross this frontier, because it merely replicates an existing genetic palate. It is unconvincing to argue, as some techno-utopians do, that giving a child a heightened genetic capacity for music or athletics or intelligence is no different from giving a child piano, swimming, or math lessons. In fact, there is a big difference. It is one thing to take a person's given nature and given capacity, and seek to develop it, and quite another to shape that person's nature in accordance with one's will.

There is no reason to object to people's attempting brain implants and somatic gene enhancements on themselves. Perhaps, in some cases, these will do some good; others may end up doing injury. But at least these people have, through their free choices, done it to themselves. The problem arises when people seek to use enhancement technologies to shape the destiny of others, and especially their children.

But, argues Lee Silver, we have the right to terminate pregnancy and control our children's lives in every other way; why shouldn't parents be permitted to alter their child's genetic constitution? In the single instance of gene therapy to cure disease, I'd agree—because, in this one limited case, we can trust the parents to make a decision that there is every rational reason to believe their offspring would decide in the identical manner, were they in a position to make the choice. No child would say, "I can't believe my parents did that to me. I would have chosen to have Parkinson's disease."

But I would contend that in no other case do people have the right to bend the genetic constitution of their children—or anyone else—to their will. But they might, in good conscience, be tempted to do so; and this temptation must be resisted. Indeed, it must be outlawed—because what the techno-utopians want does, in fact, represent a fundamental attack on the value of human life, and the core principle of America.

RESCUING HUMANITY AND THE AMERICAN IDEA

The scientific-capitalist project at the heart of the American experiment was an attempted "conquest of nature." Never did the early philosophers of science, like Francis Bacon, or the American Founders conceive that this enterprise would eventually seek to conquer *human* nature. Their goal was to take human nature as a given, as something less elevated than the angels, and thus requiring a government characterized by separation of offices, checks and balances, limited power. At the same time, the Founders saw human nature as more elevated than that of other animals. They held that human beings have claims to dignity and rights that do not extend to animals: Human beings cannot be killed for sport or rightfully governed without their consent.

The principles of the Founders were extremely far-reaching. They called into question the legitimacy of every existing government, because at the time of the American founding, no government in the world was entirely based on the consent of the governed. The ideals of the Founders even called into question their own practices, such as slavery. It took the genius of Abraham Lincoln, and the tragedy of the Civil War, to compel the enforcement of the central principle of the Declaration of Independence: that we each have an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that these rights shall not be abridged without our consent.

The attempt to enhance and redesign other human beings represents a flagrant denial of this principle that is the basis of our dignity and rights. Indeed, it is a restoration of the principle underlying slavery, and the argument between the defenders and critics of genetic enhancement is identical in principle, and very nearly in form, to the argument between Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln on the issue of human enslavement.

In that tempestuous exchange, which laid the groundwork for the Civil War, Douglas argued for the pro-choice position. He wanted to let each new territory decide for itself whether it wanted slavery. He wanted the American people to agree to disagree on the issue. He advocated for each community a very high value: the right to self-determination.

Lincoln challenged him on the grounds that choice cannot

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be exercised without reference to the content of the choice. How can it make sense to permit people to choose to enslave another human being? How can self-determination be invoked to deny others the same? A free people can disagree on many things, but it cannot disagree on the distinction between freedom and despotism. Lincoln summarized Douglas's argument as follows: "If any one man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object."

Lincoln's argument was based on a simple premise: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master." Lincoln rejects in principle the subordination implied in the master–slave relationship. Those who want freedom for themselves, he insists, must also show themselves willing to extend it to others. At its deepest level, Lincoln's argument is that the legitimacy of popular consent is itself dependent on a doctrine of natural rights that arises out of a specific understanding of human nature and human dignity. "Slavery," he said, "is founded in the selfishness of man's nature—opposition to it, in his love of justice. These principles are in eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision so fiercely . . . convulsions must ceaselessly follow." What Lincoln is saying is that self-interest by itself is too base a foundation for the new experiment called America. Selfishness is part of our nature, but it is not the best part of our nature. It should be subordinated to a nobler ideal. Lincoln seeks to dedicate America to a higher proposition: the proposition that all men are created equal. It is the denial of this truth, Lincoln warns, that will bring on the cataclysm.

Let me restate Lincoln's position for our current context. We speak of "our children," but they are not really ours; we do not own them. At most, we own ourselves. It is true that *Roe* v. *Wade* gives us the right to kill our unborn in the womb. The right to abortion has been defended, both by its advocates and by the Supreme Court, as the right of a woman to control her own body. This is not the same as saying the woman has ownership of the fetus, that the fetus is the woman's property. The Supreme Court has said that as long as the fetus is occupying her womb, she can treat it as an unwelcome intruder, and get rid of it. (Even here, technology is changing the shape of the debate by moving up the period when the fetus can survive outside the womb.) But once a woman decides to carry the pregnancy to term, she has already exercised her choice. She has chosen to give birth to the child, which is in the process of becoming an independent human being with its own dignity and rights.

NO PLACE FOR PARENTAL TYRANNY

As parents, we have been entrusted with our children, and it is our privilege and responsibility to raise them as best we can. Undoubtedly we will infuse them with our values and expectations, but even so, the good parent will respect the child's right to follow his own path. There is something perversely restrictive about parents who apply relentless pressure on their children to conform to their will—to follow the same professional paths that they did, or to become the "first doctor in the family." These efforts, however well intentioned, are a betrayal of the true meaning of parenthood. Indeed, American culture encourages a certain measure of adolescent rebellion against parental expectations, precisely so that young people making the transition to independence can "find themselves" and discover their own identity.

Consequently, parents have no right to treat their children as chattels; but this is precisely the enterprise that is being championed by the techno-utopians. Some of these people profess to be libertarians, but they are in fact totalitarians. They speak about freedom and choice, although what they advocate is despotism and human bondage. The power they seek to exercise is not over "nature" but over *other human beings*.

Parents who try to design their children are in some ways more tyrannical than slaveowners, who merely sought to steal the labor of their slaves. Undoubtedly some will protest that they only wish the best for their children, that they are only doing this for their own good. But the slaveowners made similar arguments, saying that they ruled the Negroes in the Negroes' own interest. The argument was as self-serving then as it is now. What makes us think that in designing our children it will be their objective good—rather than our desires and preferences—that will predominate?

■

The power the techno-utopians seek to exercise is not over 'nature' but over other human beings.

■

The argument against slavery is that you may not tyrannize over the life and freedom of another person for any reason whatsoever. Even that individual's consent cannot overturn "inalienable" rights: One does not have the right to sell oneself into slavery. This is the clear meaning of the American proposition. The object of the American Revolution that is now spreading throughout the world has always been the affirmation, not the repudiation, of human nature. The Founders envisioned technology and capitalism as providing the framework and the tools for human beings to live richer, fuller lives. They would have scorned, as we should, the preposterous view that we are the servants of our technology. They would have strenuously opposed, as we should, the effort on the part of the techno-utopians to design their offspring; to alter, improve, and perfect human nature; or to relinquish our humanity in pursuit of some post-human ideal.

Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein* describes a monster that is the laboratory creation of a doctor who refuses to accept the natural limits of humanity. He wants to appropriate to himself the traditional prerogatives of the deity, such as control over human mortality. He even talks about making "a new species" with "me as its creator and source." In his rhetoric, Frankenstein sounds very much like today's techno-utopians. And, contrary to what most people think, the real monster in the novel isn't the lumbering, tragic creature; it is the doctor who creates him. This is the prophetic message of Shelley's work: In seeking to become gods, we are going to make monsters of ourselves. **NR**

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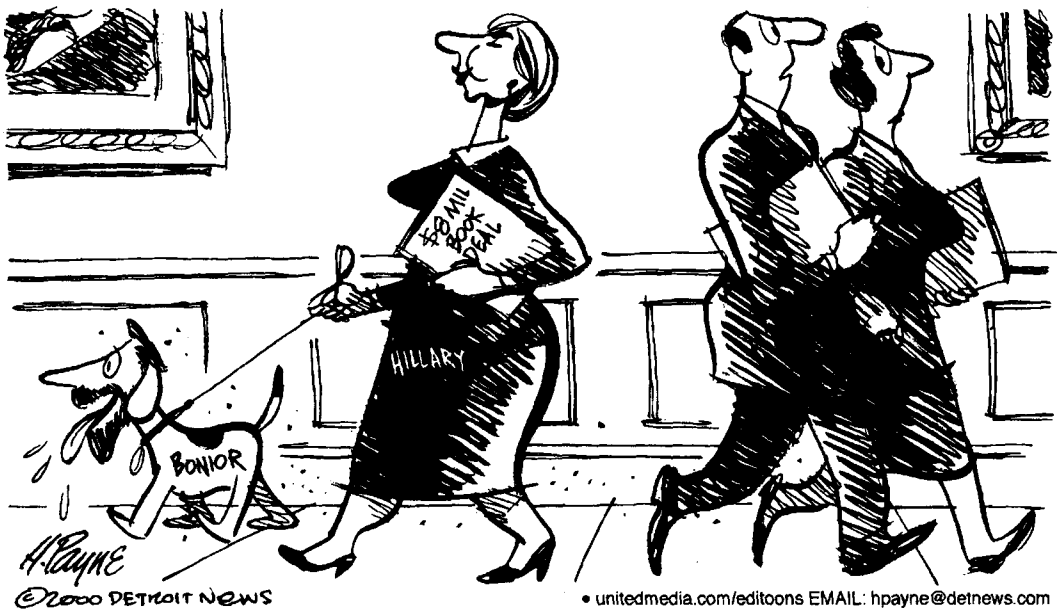

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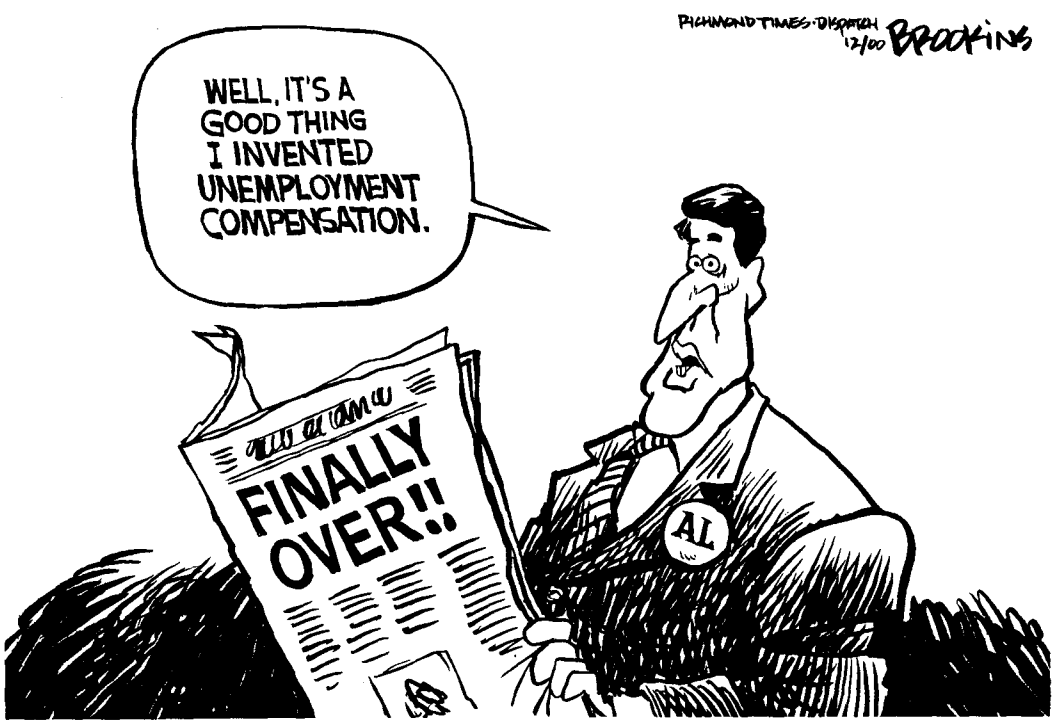

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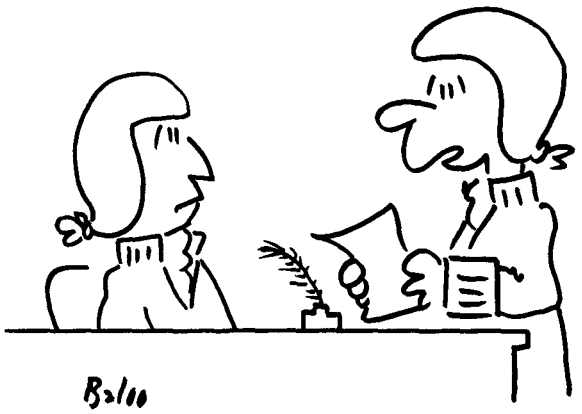

"Bad news, Mr. President: The Anti-Federalists are planning to break the cherry-tree story two days before the election."

Bubble Facts

The bubble burst on Clinton's watch.
The dot-coms are a crimson splotch
That would have made Macbeth's wife cringe.
The good times weren't "Bush's binge,"
Nor is the NASDAQ "Bush's wreck."
The guy stuck on the burning deck
Ingesting nuts is Big Bad Bill,
Who, understandably, looks ill.

—W. H. von Dreele

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 2, 2001

Dear Rusty,

Well, this is it. My last officially franked letter to you. As soon as I finish it, I'm going to print it out, stick it in my last Office of the Vice President envelope, slide it through my Office of the Vice President franking machine, toss it into the Office of the Vice President outgoing mailbag, and call it a day.

Honestly, Rusty, I'm depressed and confused. I've been packing boxes all week—clearing out the office, emptying out the hard drives—and staying pretty well organized. Everything is carefully boxed and labeled, strapped with tape, and on the side I write "From: Office of the Vice President," and then right below it is a line for the "To:" part of the label—and I don't know where I'm going.

Tipper and I have been struggling with it for a while. Carthage was briefly mentioned. "Carthage where?" Tipper wanted to know. She had been packing boxes all morning, sniffling and snuffling sadly the whole time. "Carthage Carthage," I said. "As in Tennessee. My home." Tipper laughed and laughed. Her face, which up till then had been somber and dark, lit up with a warm, merry smile. Her mood was instantly changed. "Al," she said, touching my hand, "you always know just what to say to make me smile." And she went back to her packing. So that ended that conversation.

I spent most of this morning trying to figure things out. All of the computers in the Old Executve Office Building have had their hard drives removed, so I headed over to the West Wing to use the computers there. I surfed over to the "Washington Post Real Estate Listings On-Line" and started scrolling through the offerings.

"Kitchen needs a re-do on that one," said a familiar voice behind me. It was Bill, standing alone amid the boxes, looking over my shoulder. "Hillary and I saw that one," he said, pointing to one of the listings, "and that one right below it isn't really a four-bedroom. It's a three-plus-loft. That one right below it was okay, but the paint's peeling and the garage is only a one-car."

"What about this one?" I asked, moving my cursor to a promising house.

"That one's great. Just great. Perfect for you guys, in fact."

"Great. Thanks," I said.

"Hillary and I made an offer on it yesterday. They accepted last night. Sorry, bud."

"Well, thanks for the . . . for the help, I guess," I said.

Things have been tense between us since . . . well, to be totally honest, they've kind of always been tense. Even back in 1992, we were never as close as everyone, including me, thought.

"So what's next, Al?"

"I'm thinking of going back to Carthage. You know, write."

Bill laughed. "No, come on, seriously. What's next?"

"I *am* thinking about writing a book," I said.

"Great! Great! Hey, did you hear about Hillary's advance?"

I ignored him. He was trying to get my goat, I could tell. "Actually," I said, "I want to stay around here."

"Me too," said Bill.

"Because, in a way, I'm sort of the de facto leader of the Democratic party."

"That's a coincidence," said Bill, "'cause so am I."

I ignored him. "People are suggesting that I should be a kind of shadow president," I continued.

"Hey! Me too!" he cried.

"Bill," I said, very quietly and calmly, "you can't run again, okay? You can't be president again, okay? So just . . . just . . ." My voice trailed off.

Bill looked away for a moment, smiled, bit his lower lip, cocked his head to the side, put his fingers together, turned back to me, and grinned. "That all depends," he said slowly, "on what your definition of 'constitutional' is."

And he shuffled back to his office.

But he did bring up an excellent point. Until the next campaign cycle, where are we going to go? What are we going to do?

Harvard University is looking for a new president, of course. I'll be honest, Rusty, there have been overtures. Hints. Subtle but meaningful expressions of interest. But so far, they haven't responded. It's a job that holds a great deal of interest for me, especially with my background in fundraising. So on that score, I'm hopeful.

But if that falls through, what then? I'm at a crossroads, Rusty, both personal and professional.

It's kind of sad to think about, Rusty, but the next time I write to you, I'll have to buy my own stamps. What does a letter run you to Brazil these days?

Gearing up for '04 . . . your pal,

Al

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Training for Life

JOHN D. GARTNER

The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning, by Etta Kralovec and John Buell (Beacon, 119 pp., $18)

> Every night Helene dreads coming home to a familiar scene. Her fourth grader sits surrounded by a mess of papers at the kitchen counter, grumpy or weepy, unable to complete her homework and making everyone else share her misery.
>
> Matt is struggling with his math. . . . In tears Matt throws his math book across the dining room and retreats to the TV. . . . Both parents occasionally call down to Matt to turn off the TV, but they are more concerned this evening with helping Jesse get his homework right. Finally, giving up in exhaustion, the family goes to bed.

DESPERATE scenes like these are taking place at kitchen tables all over America, according to authors Etta Kralovec and John Buell, and parents are increasingly fed up. The problem: too much homework.

Kralovec, an educator, and Buell, a former editor of *The Progressive*, claim that homework is a "destroyer of families" and should be eliminated entirely. Not only is there no evidence that homework helps kids learn, they argue, homework contributes to the disruption of family life, the thwarting of child development, low self-esteem, suicide, high drop-out rates, economic injustice, racism, and the destruction of democracy and of the world's economy.

John D. Gartner is an assistant professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University Medical School.

by Roman Genn

These charges would be laughable were it not that the book is being taken so seriously. In a recent series of articles, the *New York Times* described parents across the land rebelling against homework, many waving copies of *The End of Homework* as their manifesto. "Shortly after the book appeared," the *Times* reported, the school board of Piscataway, N.J., voted unanimously to restrict homework on weeknights to 30 minutes in elementary school and two hours in high school. Homework cannot be graded or used as punishment, and is discouraged on weekends. "If Piscataway is in the forefront, so be it," said the superintendent of schools. "We've opened up people's eyes. . . . We're attacking the fabric of an institution."

According to Kralovec and Buell, because of homework, parents and children have no time to bond anymore. Kids can't do chores—just ask them to perform one, and they'll tell you, "I'm too busy with homework" (that this could be a convenient excuse to avoid chores is an idea the authors don't even consider). Worst of all, parents must exert their authority to force children to complete their homework, and this creates unwanted conflict: "There are enough things we have to order our children to do anyway; there is enough stress in that relationship. Why aggravate it?" one parent protested.

Parents also dislike the drain homework puts on their own time. "I'm in the trenches doing math with my fourth grader at 7:30 every night," one tired father complained to Kralovec on National Public Radio. But why is Daddy doing math at 7:30? Shouldn't little Billy have done it himself at 4:30? With increasing frequency, schools require such parental handholding, and the authors correctly point out that parents resent it.

The authors have gone on a listening tour of teenage America to discover the unvarnished truth about the role homework plays in students' lives. It isn't a pretty picture. If not for those pesky assignments, the authors tell us, teenagers would have time to visit their grandparents, perform community service, do chores, study the Bible, and develop their artistic talents. They must know some exceptional renaissance teenagers; to any parent, it seems obvious that most teenagers would use their free time to watch TV, play video games, listen to music, talk on the phone, chat online, and go to the mall (or just take drugs and have sex).

As one "typical" teenage girl put it: "Some of my girlfriends tell me that they're skipping homework because they want to spend time with their boyfriends or hang out with their friends. Sometimes I don't do my homework because I need to get out of the house, go to parties, have guests coming over, have clothes to wash, have friends to help with advice, songs to record from the radio."

We would be tragically mistaken, the authors say, to confuse this with wasting time: "Many developmental psycholo-

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gists would argue instead that the first priority for adolescents is developing a social self." Frustrating those needs "is a sure route to rebellion or extreme distress—if not immediately, then often later in life." Foolishly, "how often have we told our children they can't talk to their friends until their homework is done? But the real work of adolescence is learning how to relate to others socially." The flaw in this logic is that adolescents will undoubtedly socialize, whether or not they have homework, but they won't read *The Odyssey* unless they have to.

Homework can lead to severe pathology, we are warned. When a teacher in Dexter, Me., criticized 16-year-old David for not doing his homework, that was the last straw. Said David: "I hit him and drove his teeth into his tongue. I'm just pissed I didn't hit him harder. I just don't like being told what to do . . ." It doesn't require a mental-health degree to see that too much homework is the least of David's problems.

The authors found that there have been two times in the last 50 years that a national call for higher academic standards has resulted in an increased work load for youngsters. After the launch of Sputnik in 1957, we feared falling behind the Russians. And during the recession of the 1980s, the *Nation at Risk* report sounded the alarm that America was losing the economic race to countries like Japan because their youths were working harder, scoring higher on exams, and presumably maturing into more highly skilled workers. Americans answered the call, and economically we are now far ahead of both Russia and Japan.

■

The most important lesson homework teaches is personal responsibility and self-discipline.

■

Yet for the authors, this history tells a very different story. It proves that homework is the evil tool of big business, reshaping the lives of ordinary Americans to "fit the requirements of corporate capitalism." Getting children accustomed to hard work in their early years is a ruse by "business leaders" to "psychologically prepare" them to be exploited by unscrupulous employers in the future. In other words, homework is a vast right-wing conspiracy.

What are all these assertions based on? Surprisingly (or perhaps unsurprisingly), not much. The authors' review of the data on the relationship between homework and achievement employs the fuzziest math this side of Florida. They describe the literature as "a tangle of contradictory research findings" from which we can draw no conclusions. But Harris Cooper, the researcher they cite who has done the most definitive review, summarizes 50 studies that say otherwise: "50 correlations based on 112,000 students revealed a positive relation between student reports of time spent on homework and several academic outcomes." That doesn't prove homework boosts achievement, the authors confidently assert, citing the old statistical axiom, "Correlation does not equal causation." Yet they seem desperate to find other explanations. Maybe teachers give more homework to good students. Maybe good students just do more homework, because they're motivated, but don't actually learn anything from it. The commonsense interpretation—more study produces more learning—is a conclusion the authors cannot accept. Nonetheless, many in the national press—including CNN, CBS, and *Time*—have simply repeated their claim that "homework doesn't work."

Perhaps the authors' most damning charge is that homework discriminates against the disadvantaged. Kralovec and Buell claim that upper-middle-class students from educated, supportive families with computers at home advance themselves through homework, while poor kids just become frustrated and discouraged and fall farther behind. The only fair solution, they argue, is to limit schoolwork to school hours in an effort to create a "level playing field."

Certainly, we must feel for the children who face adverse circumstances, but the authors' remedy is perverse on several levels. First, it is no favor to the disadvantaged to deprive others of a chance to achieve their potential. Second, let us not forget those immigrants and poor students who have found opportunity through education in America. They raised their station through their individual effort, not just class participation. Cynically, Kralovec and Buell call this the "Great School Legend" and decry it as a myth.

Some schools are reputed to have gone overboard, assigning hours and hours of homework, and doubtless they should moderate their zeal. But the mass emotional appeal of this book seems drawn from a more insidious source, namely that today's parents cannot tolerate the least emotional discomfort in their children. The smallest tantrum throws them into panic. It seems that parents don't want to be parents anymore. It's too painful to discipline children when we want them to be our friends. The last thing we want is to "alienate" them by insisting that they do their homework.

What many parents and teachers have lost sight of is that the most important lesson homework teaches is personal responsibility and self-discipline. Homework is practice for life.

It is alarming that this book has garnered such popular support and intellectual cachet. Homework is not a threat to our civilization—but the anti-homework movement surely is. **NR**

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The Hitler Problem

JEFFREY HART

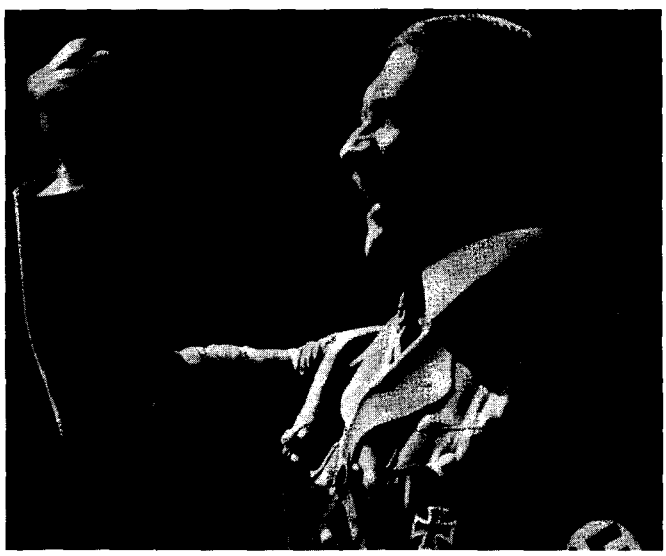
Hitler: 1936–1945: Nemesis, by Ian Kershaw (Norton, 1,115 pp., $35)

IAN KERSHAW'S two-volume biography of Hitler, a prodigious work of more than 2,000 pages, comes at an exciting moment in the study of the Nazi regime and its indispensable man. Behind Kershaw lies a half century of scholarship in these matters, and a number of important and detailed controversies. Now Kershaw, who teaches at the University of Sheffield and has mastered the bulk of this material, is in a position to sum it up, express the mainstream professional consensus, and by adjudicating the principal questions produce the best account we are likely to have of the man in his time.

To get closer to Hitler, we need the larger narrative on which everyone agrees. But we also need to settle such questions as whether he was a reactionary or a revolutionary, whether and how his regime affected the social organization of Germany, the special political theory of the Nazi state, when and how he developed his extraordinary appeal as an orator, the quality of his military leadership, whether his ultimate goals were restricted or expansive, and, given the history of Europe in the 20th century, the roots of his special hatred of the Jews and how it evolved.

Kershaw's account of Hitler and his regime tends to contradict the accepted account of *totalitarianism* as presented by Hannah Arendt and George Orwell, among others. The National Socialist regime Hitler established was *sui generis*. It emphatically did not resemble Stalinism. The Stalin regime, which provided the model for the concept of totalitarianism, was a bureaucratic dictatorship from the top down. It controlled an often resistant and indeed rebellious population through a well-organized bureaucracy, a ubiquitous secret police, and widespread terror at all levels of society.

The Hitler regime was a populist dictatorship, drawing its strength from a growing and, in time, overwhelming popular majority. This support shivered when the war broke out in September 1939. There was no joy *unter den Linden*, and Berliners toasted "death, in the New Year." But public opinion did not turn against Hitler until the war turned sour in 1942. Until 1940, Kershaw says without fear of contradiction, Hitler would have won a legitimate election in a landslide. Kershaw goes so far as to say that



Bettmann/CORBIS

Hitler at the podium, c. 1939

Hitler "became between 1933 and 1940 arguably the most popular head of state in the world."

In contrast to the Depression-wracked democracies, the German economy boomed, only in part due to warp-speed rearmament. Autobahns, Volkswagens, and strength-through-joy vacations began to be plentiful. The German birthrate also climbed, a sign of confidence in the future. Even in 1943, when many believed the war had been lost, life in Germany remained almost normal for most people. Only with the news of military disasters in Russia and Africa did the bonds between the Führer and his countrymen begin to dissolve.

The political theory of National Socialism was also unique. Hitler viewed the Germans as a "people," or *Volk*. Hitler knew that his *Volk* was comprised of disparate components—Bavarians, Thuringians, Prussians, Rhinelanders, Sudetens, Austrians—but they were all parts of the German racial stock. The *Volk* existed prior to the state, and the *völkisch* state was its political expression. The Führer was the leader and guardian of the *völkisch* state and embodied its will. Hence his slogan: *Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer*. This was the Trinity of National Socialism—which, by definition, could never be international socialism. What Hitler sought to create was a *Volksgemeinschaft*, a term that had been popularized along with its opposite, *Gesellschaft*, by the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies. The *Gesellschaft* was individualistic and based on contract, like a factory. The *Gemeinschaft* association (or society) was more like an extended family or kinship group. Hitler's Germany was to be a *Volksgemeinschaft*.

There can be no doubt that this was a potent idea in Germany during the 1930s. Hitler, through growing prosperity at home and successes abroad, through lavish parades and pageants, and the building of cathedrals of light designed by Albert Speer, became the object of a cult of adoration. But he especially achieved this through his voice. I myself think, though Kershaw does not mention this, that his orations were based on movements in the operas of his adored Wagner: He began hesitantly, brokenly, then gradually rose to paroxysms of ecstatic power in a verbal imitation of resurrection. He had the power of expressing the resentments, frustrations, and aspirations of a nation humiliated in 1918.

Yes, a populist dictatorship, willingly submitted to by the vast majority of Germans. Though the social pressure on nonconformists and individualists must have been terrific, most Germans did not experience coercion. The Gestapo (*Geheim Staats Polizei*) was much smaller than the postwar East German *Stasi*, its Communist equivalent. The Soviet Union imprisoned a much larger per-

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centage of its own people than did Nazi Germany.

Earlier I spoke of various key questions about Hitler that have been the subject of scholarly debate. Of the first importance, surely, is the genesis and crystallization of Hitler's hatred of the Jews. Without Hitler there would have been no death factories, no murderous *Einsatzgruppen* accompanying the *Wehrmacht* eastward; Hitlerism even legitimized the slaughter of Jews in satellites Hungary and Rumania.

■

Hitler 'became between 1933 and 1940 arguably the most popular head of state in the world.'

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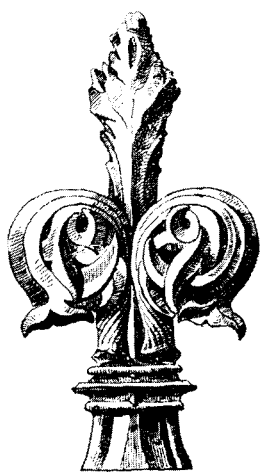
The problem for historians can be put briefly. In *Mein Kampf* (1924), Hitler at length places his anti-Semitic epiphany in prewar Vienna and his down-and-out bohemian years from 1908 to 1913. Yet there is little or no evidence external to *Mein Kampf* that supports this, not his letters nor the testimony of those who knew him. In fact, though cosmopolitan Vienna might well have shocked the young provincial from Linz, Hitler associated with Jews, and sold his drawings to Jewish retailers, eking out a precarious living.

All the evidence points to November 1918–May 1919 as the period of crystallization. While Hitler has little to say about these tumultuous months in *Mein Kampf*, it is during this period that "Jewish Bolshevism" becomes virtually a single word in his vocabulary, and his anti-Semitism becomes the core of a *Weltanschauung* that posits a worldwide Jewish conspiracy against Germany.

On November 8, 1918, Hitler lay in a military hospital in Pasewalk, temporarily blinded by gas (he had fought for four years on the Western Front and won two Iron Cross decorations—one First Class, very rare for an enlisted man). On that day, a Protestant chaplain announced the armistice to the men in Hitler's ward. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler testifies to the devastating effect this had on him, leading to his conviction that the German army had been "stabbed in the back."

This belief was possible only because while the essentially defeated army was still fighting, a violent Marxist-inspired revolution swept through Germany. There were naval mutinies at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven, and uprisings in most cities and towns. On November 9, there was an uprising in Berlin. When Hitler returned to Munich, he found a Soviet trying to govern, backed by Red Guards and a Red Army of some 20,000 men, mostly factory workers. The Executive Council in Munich was headed by a Jew, Eugene Levine; another radical leader, Kurt Eisner, held massive rallies in support of the revolution. The revolutionary leaders in Berlin included Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Both Jewish, they were soon murdered by counterrevolutionaries. Other Jewish revolutionaries included Max Levien, Rudolf Englhofer, Ernst Toller, and Gustav Landauer.

In Catholic, conservative Bavaria, the revolution never had a chance. Within weeks, it was crushed by units of the regular army and returned veterans organized into *Freikorps* troops. Hitler later referred to this period as "the passing rule of the Jews." Yet it is here that Kershaw locates the hardening of Hitler's distinctive form of anti-Semitism, when he begins to refer to the Jews in biological similes as a disease of society: parasites and bacilli, language that is clearly genocidal. By 1924 he writes in *Mein Kampf* that a million German lives lost during the Great War would have been saved if "twelve to fifteen thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the people had been held under poison gas."



Kershaw notices that Hitler devoted very little space in *Mein Kampf* to those formative events in Munich, displacing his anti-Semitic epiphany backward to Vienna before the war. He believes that Hitler did this because he himself had played no heroic role in Munich. He was a mere spectator, embarrassing to him as he contemplated his "mission" as the savior of Germany.

The Führer state, as Kershaw shows, moved dynamically in a radical direction. Hitler himself was the source of all power because of his hold on the German *Volk*. There was no need to issue detailed orders. He merely set forth the goals in broad outline, as he had done in *Mein Kampf* and countless speeches. Here Kershaw introduces an expression I had not known before: "working toward the Führer." Individuals competed for Hitler's favor by divining his wishes and getting things done. Whether building U-boats or bombers, producing artificial rubber, or rounding up and "relocating" Jews, the elites of the Reich "worked toward the Führer." This produced accelerating activity in the direction he was known to favor. Little was to be gained by arguing that the country had enough U-boats, for example. And there were no institutional checks: no Politburo, no highly organized and bureaucratic party. Many of his generals correctly regarded Hitler as a military dilettante and reckless gambler, but as he rolled up success after success, none could gainsay him.

Hitler's "hubris" (the subtitle of Kershaw's first volume) grew through his triumphs, though in fact he had been exploiting the weakness and unpreparedness of powers reluctant to re-fight the Western Front. To a degree he knew this, and therefore felt driven to act before England, especially, was ready to fight. In late summer 1939, he decided to move against Poland, betting that England would not go to war. The Germans crossed the Polish border on September 1. A few days later, England declared war. Angrily, Hitler turned to Ribbentrop and asked, "What now?" His miscalculation led directly to 1945 and the inevitable coming of (to borrow the subtitle of Kershaw's second volume) "nemesis."

Though England was caught unprepared, Hitler's resources were less adequate relative to his enemies than the Kaiser's had been in 1914. Though he came close to defeating England in the summer and fall of 1940, his ME-109 fighter planes were designed for close troop support and lacked the range to protect his

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heavy bombers. A couple of thousand Spitfire and Hurricane pilots cancelled the projected invasion. Meanwhile, vastly underestimating the reserve capacities of the Soviets, Hitler invaded Russia. Given his military assets, he had started the war on a shoestring and paid the price. "What now," indeed. In short order he had managed to unite against himself a powerful coalition of England, the U.S., and the USSR. His own allies were the have-nots Italy and Japan, neither of which could do him much good (the defeat of Japan took only 15 percent of the U.S. military budget). From that point, it was onward to catastrophe. Kershaw believes that Hitler realized the war was lost as early as 1941, a year that indeed marked the strategic turning point.

■

People regarded Hitler's cold stare as transfixing. It should have been: He spent hours practicing it.

■

The portrait of Hitler that Kershaw draws throughout his two magnificent volumes shows him to have been a thoroughly repugnant individual. He was a loner all his life and died with no close friends. His relations with Eva Braun remain opaque. He mostly ignored her, but she was around for social occasions. He showed more affection for his police dog Blondi. He taught himself to be acceptable in polite society, but otherwise he was narcissistic. At Berchtesgaden, at the Wolf's Lair command post in East Prussia, and in the final Berlin bunker, he treated his sycophants to hours-long monologues that were stupefyingly boring. His manners were prissy, reminiscent of Robespierre; even his raised-arm salute was odd, turned up at the wrist. He was a vegetarian who neither drank nor smoked, and regarded Winston Churchill as a dirty old drunk. He was also a hypochondriac and fanatical about cleanliness. When he learned that he had shaken hands with a former prostitute who was marrying one of his generals, he immediately took multiple shower baths. People regarded his cold stare as transfixing. It should have been: He spent hours practicing it.

The end of Hitler in his bunker at the Reich Chancellery was grim and unheroic. When Soviet troops were advancing in the neighborhood of the bunker, he tested the cyanide on his dog. Then he fed the poison to Braun, after which he shot himself. By any measure, this was disgraceful. He deserted troops who were still fighting, who had taken a personal oath of loyalty to him and were sacrificing their lives. Hitler should have found an officer's uniform and a machine gun and died with his soldiers. He was no Wagnerian hero.

"It is an awesome story," writes Kershaw, "of national as well as individual self-destruction, of the way a people and their representatives engineered their own catastrophe—as part of a calamitous destruction of European civilization." Without the moral and material destruction brought about by the First World War, he makes clear, Hitler would have been unthinkable. And what had been the necessary condition of that earlier war? John Keegan, with the simplicity of genuine insight, replies: *prosperity*. Since Waterloo, the leading nations had enjoyed vast industrial development, improved medicine and health, the accumulation of national wealth, and expendable surplus populations. For the first time in history they could *afford* the investment required by the Western Front.

The larger question here is whether evil like Hitler's is explainable in terms of material causes or whether there is something in human nature that makes it unavoidable. The subtitles of Kershaw's two prodigious volumes, *Hubris* and *Nemesis*, are the central elements of Greek tragedy, suggesting that the real engine of history is fallen human nature, and that we are therefore always liable to catastrophe. We may think, in view of our present prosperity, that wealth and material progress protect us from this threat. But Hitler is always a possibility that lurks in the depths of human darkness and emerges when society and restraining custom collapse. That is why Thomas Mann, who loathed Hitler and Nazism, nevertheless entitled a famous essay, "Hitler, My Brother." **NR**

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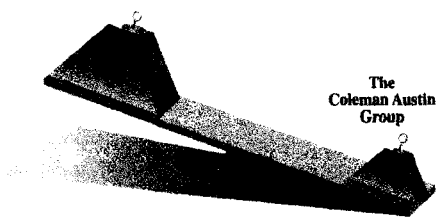

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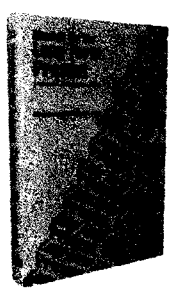

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Three Faces of Eve

MAGGIE GALLAGHER

Sex and Power, by Susan Estrich (Riverhead, 287 pp., $24.95)

Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics, by bell hooks (South End, 123 pp., $12)

Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future, by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (Farrar, Straus, 240 pp., $15)

To be a feminist these days, apparently, is to feel deeply stigmatized: Few young women call themselves feminists, and the meaning of the word itself appears in dispute and flux. What do feminists want? Why does one of the most powerful and successful social movements in this country's history appear to have no second act? Three new books, each representing a different face of contemporary feminism, attempt to explain the decline and to jump-start feminism's renewal as a mass movement.

Susan Estrich is a power feminist, preoccupied with moving more women into the upper echelons of business and politics. A professor at USC Law School who headed Michael Dukakis's 1988 presidential campaign, she is an expert on sexual-harassment law, as well as a pundit and talking head. Part of the aging Second Wave of feminists who transformed America in the early '70s, Estrich is old enough to have been the first female president of the *Harvard Law Review* and head of the National Organization for Women's first task force on employment discrimination; yet still young enough, as she sourly notes, to benefit from "legs almost as good as those of the twenty- and thirty-something blondes with whom I'm usually paired" on television.

For those who may have wondered how feminists could support Anita Hill and not Paula Jones, Monica Lewinsky, or Kathleen Willey, Estrich offers the following casuistical primer: First, throw in the towel on Anita Hill. Hill's charges, even if true, "only proved that Thomas was crude, not that he was a lawbreaker, or morally unqualified to serve." Next, claim that your abandonment of Paula Jones et al. was justified by "loyalty" or "standing by people when they're in trouble, when they need you, because they need you." In other words, loyalty to the powerful man who is able to help you politically trumps loyalty to the not-powerful woman accusing him of sexual abuse. Finally, she says, Bill Clinton was "wrongly accused." Why won't she believe Jones, Willey, or Juanita Broaddrick? "Bill Clinton doesn't need to do that," since there are "still millions of women in this country who would have happily traded places with Monica." Guys with wives or girlfriends (or especially both simultaneously), who are president of the United States, pro-abortion, and a friend of Susan's, cannot commit "real rape."

This is a feminist defense? Trust Bill Clinton to knock feminist leaders off the moral high ground and back in their place—as members of the Democratic ladies' auxiliary.

For Estrich, the bigger problem is that it's lonely at the top. Few women have followed her trail. Those who preceded her don't use their power in behalf of other women, and those who came after don't seem so interested in power: "Younger women, looking at the sacrifices made by women of my generation to make partner and get ahead, increasingly want none of it." She flirts with a feminism that is not constructed according to "boys' rules that say that career matters more than family, that success is measured in partnerships and titles." But motherhood doesn't need defenders, she concludes, while female ambition does: There are but 63 women among the top 2,500 earners in the country, and only three Fortune 500 companies are run by women. "Dropping out, pulling back, letting niceness get the best of you, not asking for enough, not pushing hard enough, is also a selfish decision, from the collective perspective of feminism," chides Estrich. "It negatively affects other women. It retards change." Seek power where men do, Estrich seems to be saying, even if you don't want it, for the sake of those who come next, even if they don't want it. Estrich's formula for the rebirth of feminism? Sisters: Help Rich Women Sit on More Corporate Boards! Hardly the stuff of a mass political movement.

Seek power where men do, Estrich seems to be saying, even if you don't want it.

Which is exactly bell hooks's complaint. An unreconstructed black radical feminist, hooks (who insists on the lowercase letters) has nothing but disdain for "reformists" like Estrich who sought only to claim the "class privilege" their brothers enjoyed. "While it was in the interest of mainstream white supremacist capitalist patriarchy to suppress visionary feminist thinking . . . reformist feminists were also eager to silence these forces. Reformist feminism became their route to class mobility." hooks is equally disdainful of what she calls "lifestyle feminism," in which "the politics was slowly removed from feminism." I wish I could tell you in more detail what hooks's revolution might look like, but in 123 pages she never gets around to explaining what "ending sexist oppression" means, aside from

Maggie Gallagher is co-author (with Linda Waite) of *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially.*

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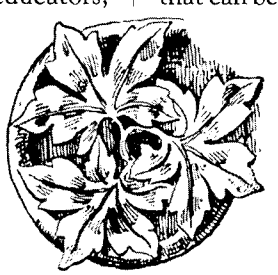
abortion on demand and contraceptives for all. Equally hard to explain is her naïve idea that all that prevents the triumph of radical feminism is bad marketing: "Let's start over. Let's have T-shirts and bumper stickers and postcards and hip-hop music, television and radio commercials, ads everywhere and billboards, and all manner of printed material that tells the world . . . that feminism is a movement to end sexist oppression."

In contrast, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, two hip "Third Wave" feminists, seek to bridge the generation gap between the aging feminists who changed America and an emerging brand of youthful feminism that "wants its own institutions and a right to its own attitudes" including "porn, sexual aggressiveness, and remaining single and childless until pretty late in life."

Here's their "manifesta": Have all-female dinner parties, grouse about men who give you "STDs" (sexually transmitted diseases), demand the right to put on nail polish in corporate boardrooms, thrill to the beat of all-girl rock bands, and "recast the slut as rebel." Oh, and by the way, adopt their 13-point political agenda ranging from "equal access to health care, regardless of income" to "liberat[ing] adolescents from slut-bashing, listless educators, sexual harassment, and bullying at school."

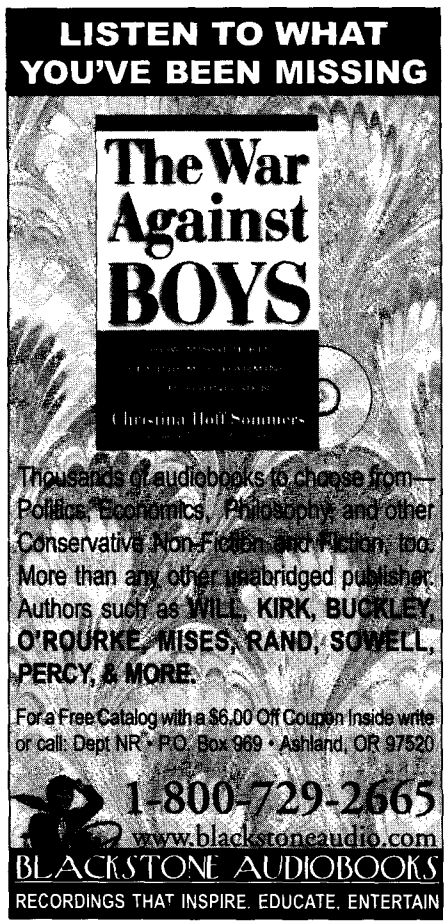


Call it the Monica Lewinsky view of life. Baumgardner and Richards want to revel in their youthful sexual power with the approval and respect of their frowning feminist mothers. But what happens when that sexual power wanes? "Younger women certainly harbor a fear of being old ladies," the authors confess. Their solution? "As young women we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to change the rules about who is sexy while we're still young and sexy and have the power to attribute sexiness to women of every age." What can one say to two young women, now already in their 30s, who remain so sexually ignorant? Fearful of adult responsibility, locked in an extended adolescence, these "girlie" feminists are a help to no one and a threat only to themselves.

There is indeed a "gendered" relationship between sex and power: Young women have a sexual power that men can only dream of. As Susan Estrich notes wryly, "No male interns, to my knowledge, have commanded the attention of the president's best friend." That kind of power can be used to channel lust into love, marriage, and children; to create a sphere of life not driven by market rules. But it is of relatively little use in the pursuit of power in politics or the corporation, where, as Estrich points out, more Monicas sleep their way to the bottom than to the top. An ambitious woman may use her sexual power as an entrée to the game, but the women who get to the top tend to be those who know how to become "honorary men," valued for their skills and not as objects of male desire.

Feminist dreams of sexual sameness in the pursuit of power are doomed to be frustrated by another, subtler gender difference: For women, power is just power, it is not also sexual power. Henry Kissinger famously quipped, "Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac." But who believes that being appointed secretary of state enhanced Madeleine Albright's sex appeal? The psychic rewards of power differ for men and women.

These are not the sort of problems that can be solved by universal day care. And there is another problem that a new generation of feminists might ponder: how to reconcile the opportunities inherent in the creative explosion of capitalism and individualism in the 21st century with women's desire to sustain the nonmarket realms of family and civil society. The feminist solution—open up men's jobs to women, untether sex and marriage—created new opportunities but also enormous new problems. Women raising children on their own have never been more vulnerable, and children in the age of allegedly independent women have never been more likely to be abandoned by their fathers. The broader issue of how to reconcile the material and emotional needs of women, children, men, and society is a problem that today's feminist "thinkers" have not yet dared to confront. **NR**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■ MUSIC ■

Two Nights at the Opera

JAY NORDLINGER

CARE for a little Lehar to go with your Beethoven? Okay, but the Beethoven first.

The Metropolitan Opera has included *Fidelio* in its current season, and a wise thing, too: The company's leader, James Levine, is a Beethoven conductor of the first order. He is, in fact, a great conductor of most any music, as will be recognized once he is good and rickety, or dead.

I heard his *Fidelio* on December 27, and will not soon forget it. From the downbeat, Levine had total control of the performance, doing everything Beethoven asks. Levine's tempos tended to be brisk, which came as a relief—this was a *Fidelio* that breathed. He did an exceptional job of building tensions (tensions being central to Beethoven). The playing of the Met orchestra, as usual under this conductor, was amazingly precise and responsive. At several points, I could not help thinking of George Szell, Levine's mentor at the Cleveland Orchestra. I could almost see the "Columbia Records" label on the old man's Beethoven albums. Levine has the Szell virtues: fidelity to the score; a grasp of the spirit of that score; and a rare (and contagious) reverence for music, one that does not flag, night after night, over the decades.

In the part of Leonore was Karita Mattila, the Finnish soprano. (Leonore, recall, is our heroine, who disguises herself as a young man to gain work in the prison where her husband, Florestan, is being held by a tyrannical political enemy.) To address the tawdry physical: Mattila is one of the most glamorous women in opera, but she was halfway believable in her Fidelio getup, all butched out. Her singing, at its best, was warm, expressive—even glorious. Her big aria had the needed combination of longing and righteous indignation. She tended to flat slightly on high notes, and then to sharp—but this was not a major distraction.

Immensely satisfying was René Pape, who sang Rocco, the jailer. No bass is more in demand today than the German Pape. He appeared last season as King Marke in the Met's *Tristan und Isolde*—a production meant to showcase Jane Eaglen and Ben Heppner (and James Levine). Pape, as it happened, stole the show, with an utterly commanding performance. In *Fidelio*, he was similarly commanding, and apt. He is that treasured singer who is rock-solid and trustworthy—like Dick Cheney in debate. You, the listener, can sit back and relax; all will be well. Pape is also a more than serviceable actor, which is a bonus, in this field.

Singing Florestan was Heppner, and here we have a problem. He is thought to be the King of Florestans now, Heppner—the successor to his fellow Canadian heldentenor, Jon Vickers, who owned the role a generation ago. And Heppner may indeed be the best we can get—which is a melancholy commentary on what we can get. He is the opposite of Pape: With him, you can never relax, never sit back in your seat, with a grin. He is usually on the verge of collapse, vocally. The tone is pinched, the breathing strained, the intonation uncertain. Undoubtedly, Heppner has the power requisite for Florestan (although I have sometimes wondered. Why does a character so weak—starving, dehydrated, at the point of death—need so much power?). But most of us would gladly trade some of that power for a touch more musicality.

Winnie Klotz/Metropolitan Opera

Ben Heppner and Karita Mattila in the Met's Fidelio

Hard as it is to find an adequate Florestan, *Fidelio* is a heavily conductor-dependent opera. Levine had any number of memorable moments. He was the master of every element: the holiness, the romanticism, the terror. The final choruses are shouts of joy (and who better than Beethoven to shout with joy?). Levine's treatment of this scene encapsulated his own sense of joy, and love of music, and instinct for musical rightness. He was singing along, delighted, enraptured, as though discovering the music, and thrilling to it, for the first time.

I have said it before, and should not shrink from saying it again: The Afro of James Levine, bobbing over an orchestra pit, is the most heartening sight in music.

Also heartening, for discophiles, is the sight of the EMI series called "Great Recordings of the Century." These are that label's—well, great recordings of . . . Here are the albums we "grew up on." In opera, we revisit such old friends as the Karl Böhm-led *Così fan tutte* (with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf et al.), and Rudolf Kempe's *Lohengrin* (with Jess Thomas et al.), and the *Carmen* of Sir Thomas Beecham and Victoria de los Angeles (and Nicolai Gedda, I can hear his fans say).

The *Fidelio*? It is most people's preferred recording of that work: the 1962 pressing of Otto Klemperer, with a cast headed by Christa Ludwig and Vickers (and—I cannot resist—the wily old bass Gottlob Frick). Klemperer had lived a very long time with *Fidelio*. He first conducted it in 1912, and never stopped probing it. The EMI recording is thought to be one of his great testaments—but I do not think it represents him at his best. Klemperer was renowned for his slow tempos in his later years ("spacious" is the euphemism of choice). Sometimes they work beautifully (as in his profound *Missa Solemnis*), sometimes not. The *Fidelio* has always seemed to me somewhat halting and stilted—too labored over, with some of the soul sucked out.

But such criticism could get you stoned in a certain crowd, and Ludwig,

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Vickers, and the rest are indeed superb.

Consider one more option in *Fidelios*: the 1995 recording led by Sir Colin Davis, available from RCA Victor. Heppner is here, and many have snapped up this product for him. But the performers who really make the thing are Davis and the American soprano Deborah Voigt.

Davis is as he customarily is: clean, tasteful, and intelligent. The Act I quartet has special poignancy, and delicacy, and uplift. And the closing choruses, like Levine's, quiver with joy and exaltation.

As for Voigt, she offers all we could want in a Leonore: her huge, juicy voice (the "most refulgent before the public today," I have said, more than once); a dependable technique; and plenty of musical understanding. They say her voice is made for Strauss, but it is equally made for Beethoven. For the rest of her career, she should do all the Beethoven parts available, few as they are: *Fidelio*, the *Missa*, the Ninth Symphony, and some songs.

Heppner, bless him, does the job in this recording. There is still that pushing—that discomfiting and unmusical exertion—but he is more rounded, more resonant. And his love duet with Voigt has a fantastic ecstasy (for which Davis, too, is responsible).

And now to our dessert: *The Merry Widow* is also featured at the Met this season, and in EMI's Great Recordings series. It took the Widow, who debuted on December 30, 1905, almost a hundred years to reach the Met, but she finally did, in the person of Frederica von Stade, the California mezzo with the Old World name. Lehar's calling card is very New Year's Evey, and the Met duly offered it on that celebratory night, giving revelers a break from *Die Fledermaus*. (The performance I attended took place on December 28.)

Does she deserve to be on this stage, the Widow? Of course she does. Done well, she can more than hold her own. Arthur Fiedler, the King of Pops, used to say there is no second-class music, only second-class music-making. This is not quite true, but, like "Everyone's opinion is valid," it is a useful lie. For musicians, the key to "slumming" is never to act like you are doing it. Always maintain your dignity, and that of the score.

Von Stade made her entrance down a red-carpeted stairway, with something like confetti in the air and men at her feet, in the manner of Dolly Levi, back "where she belongs." The great surprise of von Stade's performance was that she did not over-ham (a longstanding weakness of hers). If anything, she was a subdued Widow. Her "Vilja" aria was simple and affecting; she gave us a beautiful interpolated A toward the end of it. And—to return to the tawdry physical—she certainly looks like the Widow should: Von Stade made her Metropolitan debut in 1970, and she is as dazzling as ever.

Winnie Klotz/Metropolitan Opera

The soon-to-be ex-Widow and her man, sung (and danced) by Frederica von Stade and Hakan Hagegard

The Widow's semi-reluctant suitor, Danilo, was the Swedish baritone Hakan Hagegard, a fine and versatile performer. It was pleasant to think that this suave, charming operetta singer was the same man I had heard a year before in Shostakovich's Symphony No. 14, one of the bleakest, most harrowing works in music. His Danilo went down easy. But he seemed to tire toward the end, as did von Stade. Their "Lippen schweigen"—the great, waltzy duet on which the operetta concludes—was awful: ragged, unfeeling; just badly, badly sung.

In all, this *Widow*, conducted by the Israeli Asher Fisch, was a surprising failure. It was often pretty and acceptable, but not scintillating, not effervescent—not sufficiently "Viennesey," to borrow from Ira Gershwin. It was like a glass of cola that had lost its fizz. Its 1-2-3 was a little straight. It was beset with coordination problems. So the Met managed to accomplish the nearly impossible: a dull *Merry Widow*, which made for a less than merry holiday season.

Absolutely, perfectly merry, however, is EMI's Great *Widow*, boasting that well-loved lineup of Schwarzkopf, Eberhard Wächter, Hanny Steffek, and Gedda, all led by the underrated conductor Lovro von Matacic. This 1962 recording is, in a word, consummate. It should seal the *Widow* as an immortal piece of froth.

This was Schwarzkopf's—and Gedda's—second recording of the work, the first having been made almost ten years before, with the conductor Otto Ackermann and the baritone Erich Kunz (in place of Wächter). (This earlier recording, too, is available on EMI, but did not make it as a Great.) Schwarzkopf was a natural in operetta, as in everything else. She did not hesitate to apply all her technique, and all her musical intelligence, to the genre. Her album of operetta arias is also ranked with the Greats: Listen to it, and float away on a cloud of champagne and sighs.

So appetizing and idiomatic is Schwarzkopf's Widow, we are tempted to call it definitive. Even her spoken work is musical; we have the full glory of her German. Gedda, too, is in top form, with that voice both honeyed and ringing. Steffek is bell-clear and winsome. And Wächter—a most serious singer, like the others, letting his hair down a bit—is entirely felicitous. The "Lippen schweigen" is delicious, with Schwarzkopf "pure sex," as we used to say.

But due credit must go to Matacic—now all but forgotten—who presides over the affair with vigor, crispness, and high spirits. Odd that, with so much splendid singing on offer, the orchestra is a star of this recording. The EMI *Widow*, like the work itself, stands as a kind of musical summation of those dreamy days before Princip took his gun and wrecked the world.

Lehar is not Beethoven, to be sure; but neither is Beethoven Lehar. And neither *Fidelio* nor *The Merry Widow* is going anywhere, ever. **NR**

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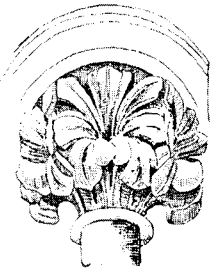
■ FILM ■

Sex, Drugs, and Costner

JOHN SIMON

STEVEN SODERBERGH, the not untalented but show-offy writer-director, has come up with ***Traffic***, a film based on a BBC TV serial, transposed by him to Mexico, San Diego, Cincinnati, and points beyond. It concerns rival Mexican drug cartels battling each other for supremacy in exporting their unholy wares to our pristine shores. Robert Wakefield, a worthy Ohio judge newly appointed U.S. drug czar, has a bit of a handicap in his 16-year-old daughter Caroline, a druggie and mild orgiast, but really a good girl merely overreacting to paternal neglect in however noble a cause.

The movie careers frantically among four or more stories. There is Robert, the worried father (Michael Douglas, who knows how to worry in a resolute, manly way), his wife, Barbara (Amy Irving, looking drawn but still lovely), and the addicted Caroline (remarkably played by Erika Christensen). Then there are the two Mexican policemen, Javier and Manolo (the hip Benicio Del Toro and vulnerable Jacob Vargas), good actors playing would-be good guys hopelessly buffeted between drug lords—one of them a police chief—more powerful than the police.



Next, there are the two American DEA agents, the Hispanic Ray Castro (Luis Guzman) and the black Montel Gordon (Don Cheadle), guarding a key witness in the trial of Carlos Ayala, an Americanized Mexican drug king in San Diego. The witness is recalcitrant and assassins are after both him and his guards. And there are Carlos himself and his wife Helena (Catherine Zeta-Jones), who either doesn't know his racket or pretends not to. He being jailed, she takes over his shady business with near-superhuman acumen, while also trying to get him out of jail and fending off the amorous advances of his sleazy lawyer (Dennis Quaid).

There is, furthermore, the rise and fall of the chief Mexican drug fighter, General Salazár, not to mention the tragedy of Ana, Manolo's anxious wife. And also the anguish of a youth from a good American family, Caroline's seducer and fellow junkie, whom Robert roughs up in a concerned fatherly way. And a Mexican killer who gets very thoroughly tortured by the police, but misbehaves again the moment he is free. All in all, two-and-a-half hours of nonstop action, made harder to follow by Soderbergh's fancy filmmaking. But what fun you can have afterward, trying to unravel what you saw.

The film is also a little longer than it needs to be, but it must be granted that it is more adult than most American movies. Best about it is that it perceives drug addiction and the crimes surrounding it as a problem of human nature, not confined to this or that underprivileged group, and that it sees no easy, or even arduous, solution. Although it concludes on a guardedly upbeat note, it offers no panacea, no feel-good ending. *Traffic* promises to be the most award-winning movie of the year, what with raves from most of my colleagues.

■ Do you remember the Cuban missile crisis? You know, the time Kevin Costner saved the eastern U.S. from being bombed to smithereens by Castro and Khrushchev? It was a grim moment in history, and the movie ***13 Days*** manages to whip up some excitement when Costner, as presidential sidekick Kenny O'Donnell, with some help from Jack and Bobby Kennedy, handles Cuba, the U.S.S.R., and our pesky generals and admirals, spoiling to rush us into atomic warfare.

Roger Donaldson is an able director with a good sense of rhythm, variety, and—although we are still here to guess the outcome—a decent measure of suspense. He has found actors most of whom resemble their characters, although Len Cariou as Dean Acheson seems too obviously made up, and Michael Fairman has none of Adlai Stevenson's charmingly quizzical glint, and looks merely feeble and rumpled. Bruce Greenwood is a reasonable facsimile of JFK, though taller and stiffer and surely more humorless; others, notably Steven Culp, who looks and acts Bobby to near-perfection, come off better. But looking right is about as much characterization as they are allowed to offer.

The most amusing performance—not entirely intentional—is Kevin Conway's Gen. Curtis LeMay. I doubt whether LeMay looked like such a snarling bulldog and emitted such goosebump-raising growls, but Conway is surely the ultimate in mad bombardiers, making George C. Scott in *Dr. Strangelove* seem positively benign.

■

Traffic is two-and-a-half hours of nonstop action, made harder to follow by Soderbergh's fancy filmmaking.

■

David Self's script brings in all kinds of cloak-and-dagger intrigue and secret negotiations that may or may not be true but certainly make history seem to imitate Hollywood movies. Jack, Bobby, and Costner—who coproduced the movie—compete in who can do a showier Boston accent, with Costner's easily the ooziest.

At predictable intervals we are treated to idyllic scenes of the O'Donnells' home life, which would make Norman Rockwell's mouth water. O'Donnell/Costner is the winner in domestic life as well as in politics; it is only as an actor that he falls short.

■ I have my doubts about the greatness of Cormac McCarthy as a novelist, but whatever his ***All the Pretty Horses*** may be like, it must be better than what survives in Billy Bob Thornton's movie. Harvey Weinstein, the scissor-happy head of Miramax Films, apparently cut it from somewhere between three and four hours to the present choppy, unpersuasive 112 minutes. Ted Tally is a good writer, and I imagine that his uncut screenplay would have made more sense, but Thornton, even without Weinstein's ministrations, isn't that

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much of a director. Here he may have been out of his element, so that a longer *Horses* may not have been a horse of a different color.

This is a kind of mystical western novel that now emerges shorn of its mysticism, and just plain silly. I shall spare you the story (more mischief in Mexico), which here leaps about like a kangaroo and is chary of logic, but I will say that, as the star-crossed lovers, Matt Damon and Penélope Cruz generate less electricity than would make a frog's leg twitch. Among the supporting players, only Lucas Black, as a juvenile hothead of a cowboy, stands out. Barry Markowitz's grandiose cinematography dwarfs the puny characters crawling around in it, and Marty Stuart's presumably appropriate music appropriates way too much of the soundtrack.

Matt Damon has repeatedly declared what a great director Billy Bob was, and how he was able to make the actors feel free and relaxed. Which goes to show that a picnic for the actors may not profit the picture.

■ The painter Jackson Pollock may well have been as uncouth as the movie ***Pollock*** paints him to be, and Ed Harris (whose directorial debut this is) plays him not so much warts and all as all warts. But the screenplay by Barbara Turner and Susan J. Emshwiller, based on the book by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, merely drips data onto the screen, and never provides a coherent portrait of the man. Outstanding, however, are the cinematography of Lisa Rinzler and the performance of Marcia Gay Harden as Lee Krasner, Pollock's long-suffering wife.

Artists' biographies are a tricky movie subject. The artist at work can be shown only in simplified or romanticized form, and his figure tends to get sentimentalized or mythicized. *Pollock* does passably by the former—dribbling paint all over a floor being more photogenic than just belaboring a canvas—but the grand failure of the film lies in its total lack of analysis of what made Pollock the monster portrayed. Still less does it interpret his influence on art history, or try to grapple with the question of the artist's moral responsibility. What emerges is a fictionalized documentary, a failure in both directions. **NR**

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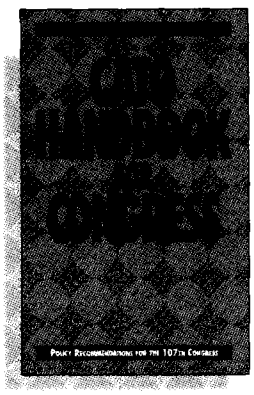

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■ CITY DESK ■

Intelligent Design

RICHARD BROOKHISER

YOU might think the best stores sell nifty things, but those are only the second-best stores. The best stores sell nifty ideas. One such is Moss on Greene Street.

The ostensible stock of the store is home furnishings, mostly housewares, with some tables and chairs thrown in. Inexpensive home furnishings are sold at Kmart or Macy's; funky retro ones are sold at Restoration Hardware. Moss sells home furnishings of the future—designers' latest ideas of what spoons and coat hangers should look like. Every object or set is displayed, as at a gallery or a trade show, in a neat little pool of space, with a card explaining its provenance and, very often, the theories of its maker. Even when the designs are 30 years old, they have the freshness of a new sketch.

Every surface at Moss is bright: Glass and metal objects shine, plastic and rubber ones come in glowing colors. All these tiny reflections and highlights, like the flashbulbs of a hundred Lilliputian paparazzi, are seductive—"Hey, Shmendrick," you imagine yourself hearing, "look at me!" But it is also intimidating. What would you actually do with that archangelic knife if you bought it? Stick it in a jar of Skippy?

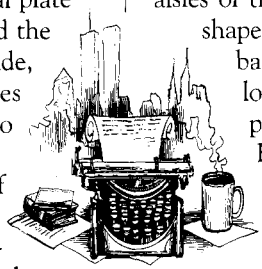
Many of the items are funny: a soap dish made of soap; a doorbell whose buzzer activates a small hammer between two crystal champagne flutes (perfect for the home of Veuve Clicquot). A few yards away are the very glasses that would respond to such a ring: They are curved sideways, like running figures in a cartoon. "Are you thirsty?" they seem to ask. "Time to quench it!" When you have a purchase gift-wrapped, the salesman finishes the job by affixing a sticker with a picture of a bow on it. But most of the objects in the store, even the lighthearted ones, are infused with the seriousness of craftsmanship. Someone made this particular fork, not just to stick a burrito or a kielbasa, but because that is the way a fork should look.

One designer (Hella Jongerius of Droog Design) has produced a set of mismatched dishes. "The cohesion" of the set, the accompanying card earnestly explains, "comes from the consistent imperfection." The dishes are meant to recall "items of a service which have been collected in all kinds of ways over the years." The rims of the stacked plates buckle and curl against each other like the pages of a book that was left out in the rain. For $200 you can own four of Ms. Jongerius's plates. True, your Aunt Sally achieved a similar effect by buying four plates for $2 at Woolworth's during World War II, and keeping them, with all their cracks and chips, until she passed away. Half a century of wear and tear will cost you an extra $198 if you buy it brand new. But each individual plate of Ms. Jongerius's is lovely, and the care with which the set was made, and subtly unmade, replicates the devotion your aunt paid to the idea of thrift.

■

Even when the designs are 30 years old they have the freshness of a new sketch.

■



Sometimes the intensity of artistic creativity produces strange results. One design studio has convinced itself that, because it is near the German village where the remains of the first Neanderthal man were found, the flatware it makes looks prehistoric—its knives are like stone axes, its spoons are like cupped hands. But if the poor Neanderthals had had metal implements like these, they would have driven the Cro-Magnon men into the sea, and we would all have sloped foreheads. The artsy types are thinking of the apes in *2001* when they are really designing tableware for the makers of the black monolith.

Odder still are the designs based on Meissen, the German porcelain of the 18th century. Looking at these pieces decorated with chinoiserie and scenes of rustic flirtation induces a case of the historical bends. When Meissen was first made, Bach was composing and German princelings rented out their peasants as mercenaries. Since then, Germany has given us, in rapid succession, Beethoven, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, Bismarck, the Kit Kat Club, Hitler, and the Beetle. If we are back at Meissen again, is the cycle starting all over?

The enemy of fruitful aesthetic intensity is irony. Alas, it has breached the gates of Moss. One display case features a set of bonded nickel tchotchkes called "Buildings of Disaster"—miniature models of the Texas School Book Depository, the Oklahoma City federal building, the Branch Davidian compound; there is even a set of toy cars representing O.J.'s flight in the Bronco. These *tableaux morts* are supposed to provide a "populist history of architecture," based on our "emotional involvement" with famous crimes and catastrophes. The "Buildings of Disaster" need one more item—a bronze circular file. When jokes become bad jokes, and bad jokes are taken seriously, we are on the short, short road that leads to Jeff Koons.

The fussiness of designers is an elitist rebuke to the slovenliness of the age. Most of the customers circulating in the aisles of the store (including me) wear shapeless coats that look like trash bags, and shapeless caps that look like old socks. Their workplaces no doubt observe casual Fridays, unless they work at a dot-com, where the regime is casual every day. Looking at a knife no Neanderthal man ever imagined gives us modern Neanderthals a point of contrast as we rummage through our middens of video cassettes and takeout food.

Christmas, Ramadan, and Hanukkah all overlapped at the end of 2000, with each other and with the peak retail season, raising the question of what a saint would make of Moss. Buddha preached against the stimulation of desire; the Semitic faiths are subject to spasms of iconoclasm; Malcolm Muggeridge liked to quote a line of St. Teresa of Avila, comparing the world to a second-class hotel. That strikes me as the attitude of a second-class guest. The world is full of sweet things, like moss. If the Creator made them with such attention to detail, a creature may do likewise. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Hunt for Democratic Treasure

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 26

RETROSPECTIVE indignation on who didn't get to vote in Florida raises interesting questions, not least: What about ethnic minorities who, never mind the dimpled chad, didn't go to the polls at all? And never mind the minorities, what about all the non-minorities who didn't vote at all? The national participation in the election this year reached 51 percent, which means that almost one half of eligible voters didn't even try to vote. Question: If voting is so clearly a necessary act of vindicated citizenship, why is curiosity so great about John, whose vote was untranscribed, and not about James, who made no attempt to realize his voting right?

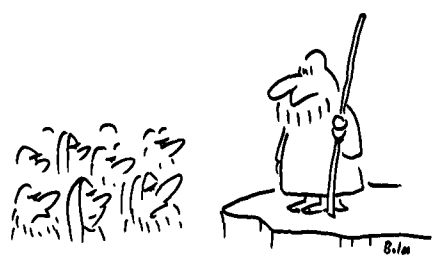
The *New York Times*'s editorial page assures us that the huge curiosity over the Florida vote—there are many organizations engaged in doing their own vote-counting—has nothing really to do with the election of a new president. That job has been done and certified. The motivating force for the re-recount is a concern to discover whether there were patterns of injustice, from which black Americans especially suffered. It is held that in some districts voting machines were crankier than in others and that face to face with such machines, some voters simply gave up and went home. And lo! these machines are regularly located in areas of higher black concentration.

Does that add up to a violation of the Voting Rights Act? The immediate answer to that question is: yes—if the intention of the voting-machine providers was to discourage the black vote. But if there are Model A voting machines that are easy and efficient, and Model F voting machines that are less user-friendly, political iniquity is not proven. The likelier explanation is that we have another instance of poorer sections of town having more potholes than more affluent sections of town, from which distribution of municipal solicitude we can draw the usual conclusions, but these do not tell us that a deprivation of the vote, based on equal voting rights for everybody, has been proven.

On the matter of the posthumous recount, one hears about the "documentary cravings of historians and journalists." Yeah. We say it's spinach and the hell with it. The rabid interest is motivated by a craving psychologically to invalidate the election of George W. Bush.

Not invalidate it in the sense that he will be ushered out of the White House, just strip him of his legitimacy. It is the equivalent of a DNA expert sneaking up on the king to snip off a strand of hair that will prove he was not his father's son. In this space, a few weeks back, the motion was made, unsuccessfully, that we sequester the approximately 60,000 ballots, rather than treat them like the Alger Hiss typewriter or the Sacco-Vanzetti pistol. If the results of the new recount have the effect of increasing the size of Bush's vote, no harm is done. If they have the effect of suggesting that Florida belonged to Gore, what have we got that will please other than the *National Enquirer* and the NAACP? Why not explore the rumor that a majority of the people who signed the Declaration of Independence were drunk?

The impulse to explore and reexplore the Florida vote springs from the democratic faddism that overtook us in the past generation. The Supreme Court decided in 1962 (*Baker* v. *Carr*) that every person had to be counted equally, thus causing, or trying to, a redistricting athwart many arrangements that were the fruit of political and social compromise. In 1965 we got a Voting Rights Act that forbade a state to insist that the voter know how to read. In 1971 we had a constitutional amendment that gave the vote to 18-year-olds. Most recently we have the so-called motor-voter contrivance, relieving potential voters of the ordeal of registering to vote.



"No offense, but if you have the gift of prophecy, why have we been wandering in the desert for 40 years?"

The implicit line here is: The more voters the better, never mind illiteracy or civic indifference. But the logical extension of this position is to insist that every citizen step up and vote. Many societies require every citizen to vote. In some of these, as in Mexico for 70 years, the results were fixed—the same party always won—but never mind that. If our obsession is now to be: How did the voter in Florida vote, why should we not be interested in the question: How would elections fare if *everyone* had voted? More blacks than whites, representationally, voted in Florida this time around. What if every white had voted? How about—in our mad, statistic-driven age—extrapolating the vote? If 49 percent of Catholics who voted went for Gore, why not give Gore 49 percent of Catholics who did not vote? To go in the other direction would be to require everyone who voted for Gore to be able to spell Gore.

A New Year's Wish For Dubya

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 29

THE figures crawl in on us but we aren't really listening: A nursing shortage affecting 90 percent of hospitals in California, 75 percent in the Midwest, 85 percent in the Northeast. At Johns Hopkins, the premier facility engaged in medical exploration, some beds are shut down because—there are not enough nurses. In Great Britain the crisis is acute. Nurses are retiring and emigrating.

Now there *is* a market solution, or an approach to it: If you need more nurses, pay them more money and more young people will train for that profession. It isn't as though there were a need for 100,000 more brain surgeons: The market, in some situations, has to come to terms with the latent pool of resources. Not everybody can be taught to play like Horowitz, no matter what you agree to pay them.

The need for care intensifies for the most benevolent reason, which is that medicine is successfully harnessed to promote longevity. But, in America,

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there is the flip side, which affects medical facilities as also, of course, old-age benefits. Here we have people living longer—and procreating less. The only way to ameliorate *that* problem is to advance the retirement age or to reduce benefits. But in matters of health there is an approach to the problem that hasn't been explored and that the new president could illuminate with a truly incandescent point of light. The young generation, between high-school graduation and college matriculation, should be called on for a year's voluntary service.

The shortage of nurses would be relieved if many of their duties were performed by others. Highly trained nurses are required at the operating table and to provide therapy and sophisticated supervision. But much that a nurse now does, everything from bedpan change to writing down routine measurements on charts, could be done by 18-year-olds after very little training. How would they be recruited? And paid?

Ten years ago I looked into the question in a book called *Gratitude: Reflections on What We Owe to Our Country*. The initiative came after reading an essay by James Michener in which he predicted, with that fluency of vision for which he was celebrated, that in America the problem of caring for the aged would before too long quite simply overcome us. He made projections—and this was 20 years ago—which are coming true. Life spans have increased dramatically, by six to eight years. George W.'s distinguished father called, in the famous phrase, for a thousand points of light. Those whose tendency is to federalize any charitable impulse immediately assumed that new government projects would sprout, craning their necks for sustenance from the new light.

What eventuated, in the hands of Mr. Clinton, was AmeriCorps. But this wasn't the exercise of genuine charity. It was a gentrification of a career move: In exchange for this contribution in time, the government will contribute toward your higher education. That is very different from the kind of thing done by the Mormon community, where a year or two of service to fellow human beings in need is a near-dogmatical practice.

What do you need to steer the country in the desired direction? George W. would need to have the cooperation of right-minded educators. Suppose that ten top colleges announced that no applicants for the class of 2007 would be matriculated without evidence of having served six months in voluntary health service? You laugh. But the old, sick people wouldn't laugh. Their lives are prolonged as it is, but now they could be changed.

Israeli/Arab Primer

NEW YORK, JANUARY 2

On the matter of the impasse in the Middle East, a few observations:

1. There is no way the United States can decisively affect the Arab/Israeli deadlock without exerting on Israel the kind of pressure politics wouldn't permit, and honorable behavior wouldn't license. If it is so, as is so frequently (and so persuasively) argued by the pro-Israeli hard-liners, that appeasement of the Palestinians is not possible, then why do we spend so much time on a fruitless enterprise? Some years ago the author Norman Podhoretz argued that the closest we can come to understanding Palestinian strategy is to recall our dealings with North Vietnam. Every concession we made, every indecisiveness sounded, played into the North Vietnamese vision of U.S. irresolution, and fortified their resolve to unite the two countries under Hanoi sovereignty.

2. There are many differences in the two theaters, but one is critical. It is the insuperable military resources of Israel. Yet these depend on the fidelity of the United States to the matter of Israel's survival. This is not an open question on the American political scene, but even if Mr. Podhoretz is correct, it's not easy to defend all of Israel's claims. These have been crystallizing in the recent period. One seems especially reasonable, in historical perspective. There are nearly 4 million Palestinian refugees, many of them living in camps, who trace their or their parents' origins to territory indisputably Israeli, by right of conquest alone. The proposal of Mr. Clinton that these claims to repatriation rights be abandoned seems reasonable. The Podhoretz point here would be that any abandonment by the Palestinians of this alleged right is nothing more than a tactic. Five years from now, the Palestinian Authority could simply reassert the right, when appropriate, to press its ambition for the elimination of the Israeli state.

3. Even as the refugees' rights to repatriation appear progressively synthetic, the Israeli settlers' claims to their squatting rights in the West Bank are a guarantee of endless tensions, insecurity, and opportunism. When we settled finally with American Indian tribes we felt it right, and prudent, to cede a dozen territories that continue, under general supervision of U.S. law, as little nativist enclaves. But these were possible in a geographical context of borders that stretch 3,000 miles in a country of consolidated law and custom. It is not to be compared with the settlers' endless lesions pockmarking territory that the Israelis are otherwise prepared to turn over to a population 95 percent of which is Arab/Palestinian.

4. We are reminded of the awful influence of terrorism. Its impact is, of course, decisive on those who are killed or wounded. They are the direct victims. But an entire society is victimized. In Bethlehem, over Christmas, there was only emptiness. The pilgrims would not go, because of possible exposure to the terrorist. The income from tourism, a major item in Israel's finances, shrinks to near zero. Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* reported recently that he was almost alone in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem one day a few weeks ago.

What can be done, in a region where there is almost every day an exchange of violence? Whatever the disputed authority of Arafat, it is so that his word has considerable influence on rock-throwers and terrorists. His word may not be enough to end violence, but it is enough to mitigate it.

5. Our frame of mind on the peace/war front should seek to be dispassionate in the search, not of attachment, but of reality. There are lapses here, as with the recent assassination of Binyamin Kahane. The point was picked up nicely by *Slate*'s "Today's Papers" in a piece by Michael Brus. "The *Times* describes Kahane, the son of Brooklyn's racist rabbi Meir Kahane (himself assassinated in 1990), as a 'radical right-wing settler' who was 'soft-spoken and introverted' and an 'unlikely heir' to his father's 'anti-Arab legacy.' (The Associated Press gives a similar gloss, calling Kahane a 'quiet, introverted son' who 'sought to keep his late father's radical message alive.') Now, why don't the *Times* and the AP simply call Kahane a racist who advocated murder?"

That kind of clarity of vision we do very much need.

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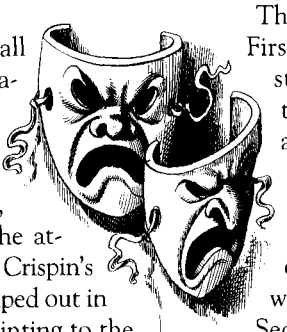
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

SHOOT if you must this old gray head, but don't disenfranchise me. The correct word is *disfranchise*. As a woman who favors the repeal of the Nineteenth Amendment, I want that "en" out of there before they do it to me. It's like saying "inextrovert" for introvert.

Well, the election has been decided—"expeditiously," to use another Florida-generated word. It means allowing plenty of time for everybody to become a part of history.



"It's history and we're all here," said the party of vacationers at the Tallahassee courthouse. "We're waiting for history," said the man dug in for a vigil with wife, kids, and mother-in-law. The atmosphere was positively St. Crispin's Day-ish: whole families camped out in front of marble porticos, pointing to the youngest member and declaiming, "Some day his grandchildren will tell their grandchildren what he told them about being here and remembering this."

The locution that struck me was "Years from now . . ." It had a familiar rhythm, like a perfect wave carrying me back to some history of my own. It eluded me until somewhere around the 517th man-in-the-portico interview, when I remembered. It was Deborah Kerr's curtain line in *Tea and Sympathy*, when she gives herself to the sensitive schoolboy to prove to him that he is not the homosexual her macho husband has made him out to be. Unfastening just the top button of her sweater, she sits down on his bed and says: "Years from now, when you talk about this—and you will . . . be kind." Critics of Katherine Harris's mascara, take note.

Even professionals like GOP recount observer Bobby Burchfield saw himself as a fly on the wall. "This is history," he said earnestly. "This is an important juncture not just in this election cycle, but in history. I felt strongly enough about it [that I dropped] my plans for the weekend and came here."

The spectacle of Americans trying to hot-wire themselves into connectedness with their own country somehow does not bode well, but then what does? Anybody with stock in American Bode-Well would be wise to sell it. Nor will things be any different a hundred years from now, because dragging kids into the shadow of Corinthian columns and barking, "Remember this or I'll knock your block off," is simply at odds with the realities of the juvenile memory process.

There are two things to consider. First, the ability to notice and store vivid details during historic moments is adversely affected by having to pee, a priority that can wipe out whole chunks of speeches, vigils, assassinations, and coronations ("What king?") without a trace.

Second, children never remember what they're supposed to remember, but instead latch maniacally onto some minor detail that drives adults wild. As proof I offer the Pearl Harbor Finger. Everybody in my kindergarten remembered Pearl Harbor, but the impact of turning points, ends of eras, and days of infamy never got through to us. What was seared on our minds was the photo that ran over and over in newsreels and newspapers, and still shows up in WWII documentaries to this day: the *Arizona* blowing up, and in the upper right-hand corner a man's index finger pointing toward the mouth of the harbor.

We wanted to know whose finger it was. That's *all* we wanted to know. Like Baby Snooks whining, "Why, Daddy?" we plagued our parents without mercy. They told us it was probably someone directing the photographer's attention to another shot, but that wasn't enough. We wanted his name, and did he know his finger was in the picture, and did he mind, and what was he pointing at? Multiply my kindergarten by all the other kindergartens in America in 1941 and you will have a clear idea of what being a part of history is all about. If AARP polled their 65-year-old members on what we remember best about Pearl Harbor, the overwhelming answer would be our fathers yelling, "To hell with the finger!"

It's a cert that what today's children will remember about Indecision 2000 is the cross-eyed recounter. Did he see two votes instead of one? Was he born cross-eyed, or did he get that way from looking through little holes? If his eyes crossed all of a sudden, did he get sick to his stomach and throw up on the chads? Will he still be a part of history if the doctor uncrosses his eyes? *Why, Daddy?*

Indecision 2000 was a boon to teachers, who were thrilled when their students expressed enthusiasm for studying the Electoral College. Lesson plans were revised to meet popular demand and the the long count was praised as "a great civics lesson."

That doesn't bode well either. The way to understand the Electoral College is not to study it but to feel it, to close your eyes and let it wash over you in a great rushing torrent of Americanness, and then sit back and celebrate it as a national eccentricity.

National eccentricities are the cornerstone of national identity. The Electoral College is to us what cricket is to the English, something that we know in our pores but can't explain to outsiders without making it more complicated than it already is. Out of this failure to communicate grows the sweet fruit of cultural pride. The English are never more happily English than when they can announce, "It's quite simple actually," as a prelude to explaining cricket. The same is true of Germans explaining why their unreadable script is easy to read, or the French explaining why their unnecessary verb tenses are necessary. It's a subtle way of boasting to outsiders that *we* are crazy but *you* are not.

National eccentricities bind a people together and forge the connectedness Americans crave without requiring them to spend the night in a sleeping bag before a marble portico, waiting for something to tell their grandchildren. As a country given to conformity, we don't have enough national eccentricities, but at least we have the Electoral College—so we should guard it well. Don't end it, don't even mend it, because it gives history something to remember us by. **NR**

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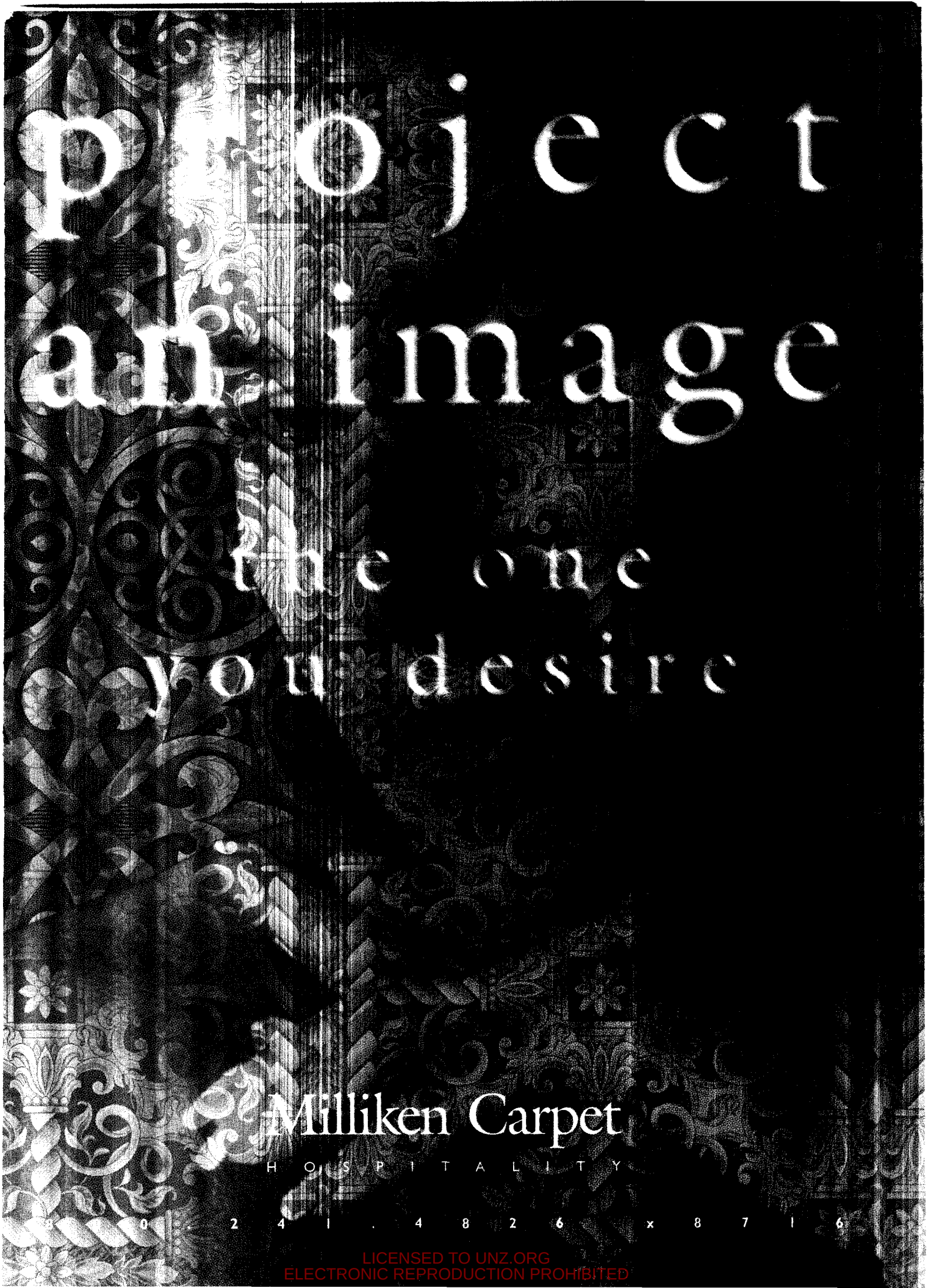

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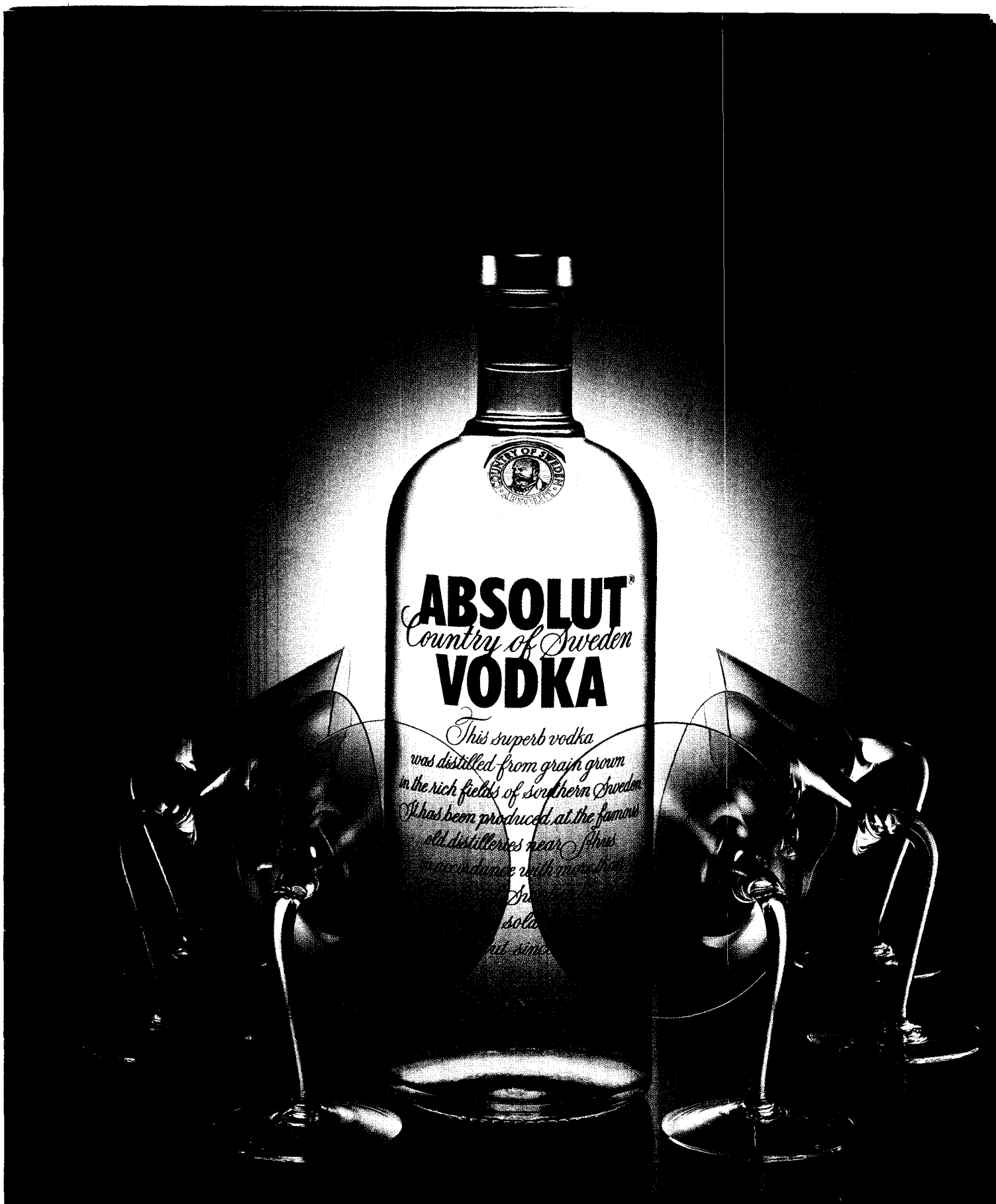

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